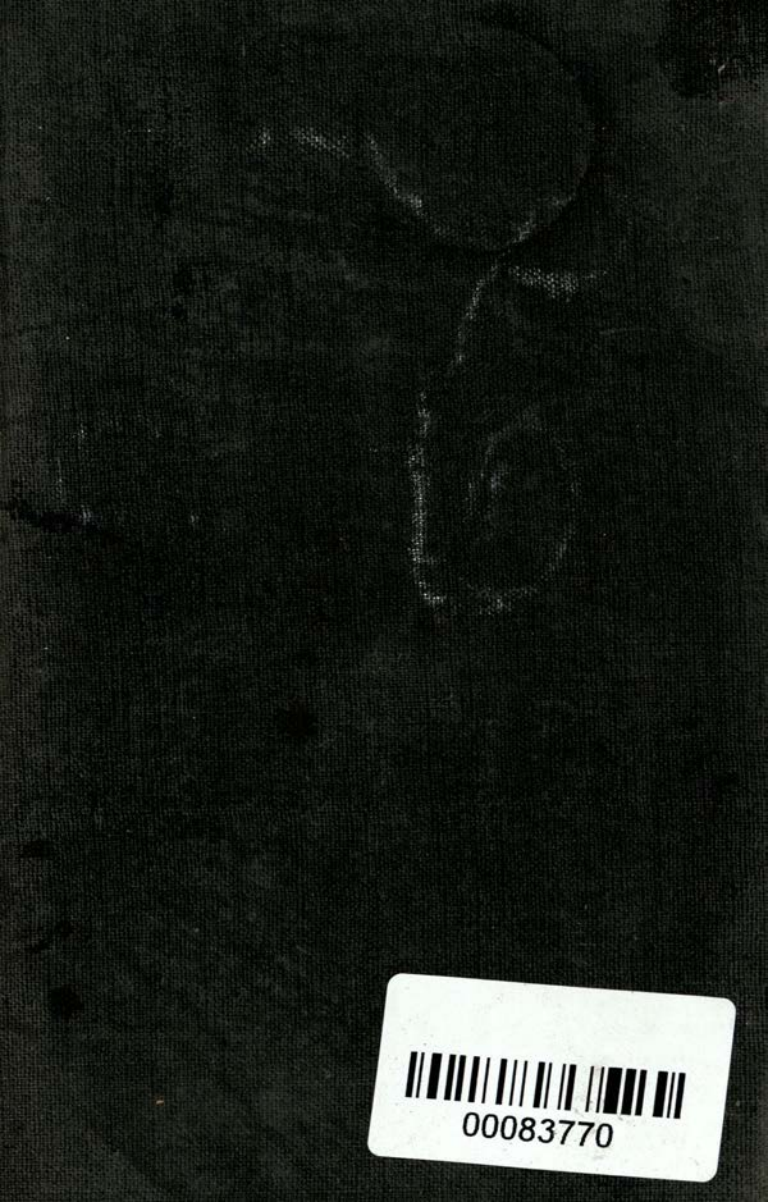
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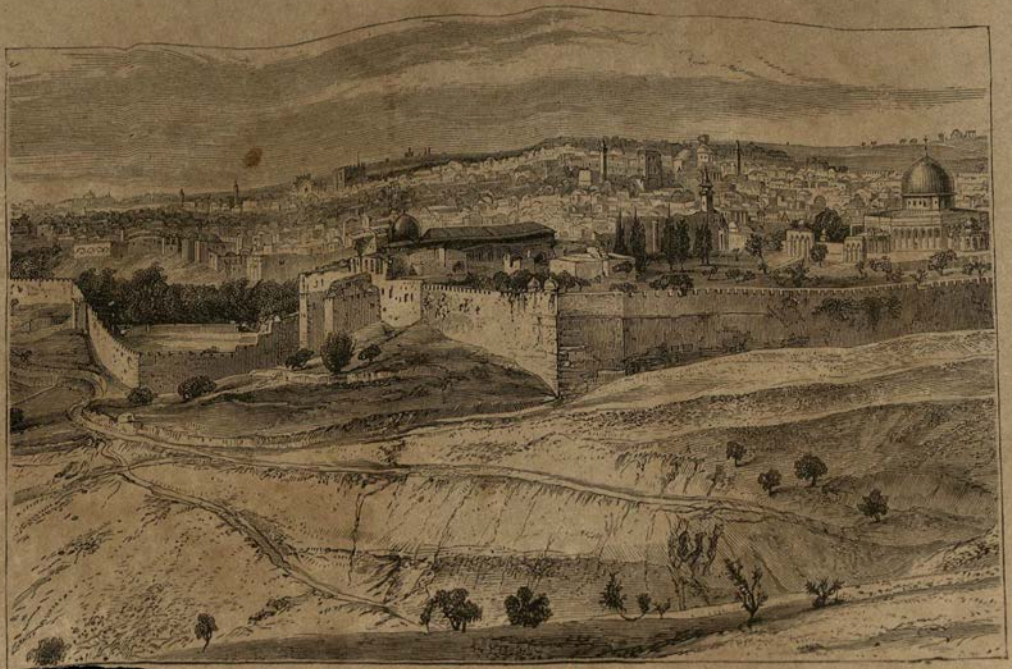

JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. *Page* 175.

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FOR YOUNG READERS

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BY

NORMAN MACLEOD

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This book, intended for youthful readers, is an abbreviated reprint of my father's volume "Eastward," which is the record of a journey in the Holy Land made by him in 1864.

ANNIE C. MACLEOD.

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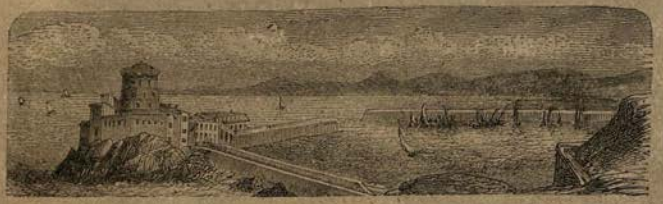
FROM ENGLAND TO PALESTINE.



FROM ENGLAND TO PALESTINE.

CHAPTER I.

FROM MARSEILLES.

ALEXANDRIA is the starting-point to Palestine for all travellers approaching it from the west. For that port we left London on Wednesday morning, were all Thursday in Paris, left the same night, and reached Marseilles about one in the afternoon of Friday.

We left Marseilles on the morning of the 20th of February, in the somewhat old—and not in all respects singularly comfortable—but yet sound ship *Valetta*, with as good a captain and officers as voyager could wish. It is a weakness of mine always to prefer a British ship to every other, especially when out of soundings. There

is something in the "Ay, ay, sir!" which inspires a confidence that nothing uttered by a foreigner can do. This is of course "provincial," but I don't profess to be anything else.

The weather had nothing of the warm south in it; the air was sharp and chill. We had showers of snow and sleet, the hills were white, the skies dull as lead, and one looked forward to Egypt and Syria as to a comfortable fire, whatever other attraction they might possess.

Soon after leaving the splendid docks of Marseilles, we sat down to a sumptuous breakfast, and, as it happens in most sea voyages, the passengers met together for the first time—and in very many cases for the last. How important is the prospect of a voyage, even of a week, to those who have to "go down to the sea in ships;" but to none on board of this or any vessel afloat, was it more momentous than to a respected member of our party.

Poor fellow! He was a victim; a down-trodden, crushed, silent, and miserable slave to the demon of sea-sickness. That remorseless ocean-monster shook him, bound him, laid him prostrate, beat every bone in his body, knotted every muscle, tore every nerve, tortured him, turned him inside out, yet without a word of remonstrance from him, except a feeble groan, or look of agony from glazed eyes which had hardly an atom of expression to respond to the truly kind look of Morris the steward. But at this first breakfast-table my friend was all alive and energetic; the power of the land was still upon him,

and the ship was steady as a rock; the beat of her powerful paddles was hardly echoed by the glasses upon the table.

"How fortunate we are!" "What a calm day!" "I hope it will continue so," "No one could be sick with such weather," "We may have it so all the way to Alexandria"—these were the pleasing reflections from the different smiling, laughing, contented passengers, male and female, military and mercantile, Jew and Gentile, French, German, and English, who surrounded the table.

Yet these pleasant hopes were most unexpectedly interrupted by an unaccountable lurch of the vessel, succeeded by another, and accompanied by the sharp scream of the wind as it struck the rigging, its obedient harp-strings. I suggested to my friend the prudence of lying down while I went to ascertain the cause of this very strange commotion. He did so, promising to join me in a few minutes. Alas! it was nearly a week ere he cared for anything upon earth, or rather upon sea, for all upon the quiet and solid earth seemed to him a paradise, which he would never revisit, unless for burial, if even for that.

I shall never forget the scene which presented itself when I went on deck. We had been caught by a gale, which very rapidly increased to a hurricane. Now although, as the old song says,

"I've cross'd the great Atlantic,
And weathered many a breeze,
Besides being up the Baltic
And divers other seas,"

yet I never before encountered a hurricane; and it is well worth seeing, for once at least.

The waves, at first, seemed taken all aback, as if suddenly roused from their beds, without having time to dress themselves and appear with that solemn dignity

THE GALE.

before the world which becomes an ocean-sea. They rose with awful bulk of green water, and swelled up until, curling their monstrous heads, with a thundering and defiant roar they sank again, only to gather strength to

come nearer and nearer, as if to send the vessel down with one thud to the lowest abyss. Again the wind seized them with a hissing yell, as if in a passion, and tore them to pieces when they presumed to rise, scattering them into an atmosphere of the finest snowdrift, mingling air and water in one white seething plain, and seeming to unite sea and sky in a drizzle of flying mist.

One of the most remarkable effects of the wind upon the sea was along an ugly range of precipices to leeward. The waves, according to the calculations of one of the officers, were driven up the precipice for about 120 feet, but, owing to the force of the wind, were unable to fall back with all their volume, so that the foam seemed to incrust the rock like ice, and to blow as smoke over the summit.

The watch could not stand on the forecastle, which seemed buried in spray. The officers held on upon the gangway, their faces well "cured" with "the salt sea faeme." Our sturdy ship bored her way till the afternoon through all this turmoil with that calm and resolute bravery which our steam-engine personified, as it worked away steadily with its giant arms aided by regularly supplied drops of oil.

The wind blew as if it would blow its last. "Is it possible," I asked our gallant little captain, "that it could blow stronger?" "I have never," he replied, "seen it blow so hard except in the China seas." "What if the engine give way?" was the question suggested by me—who says I was uneasy?—to the old and steady

engineer. But he would not entertain the suggestion. "A better tool never was in a ship, and for seven years she has never made a miss," was his only reply.

Notwithstanding the excitement of the hurricane and its intense interest, I was by no means disposed to complain when the *Valetta* ran for shelter—a most unusual occurrence. Fortunately Toulon happened to be the harbour of refuge. It was worth our while encountering the gale, to enjoy the unexpected pleasure of seeing this famous place.

The severe gale we had encountered told even upon this quiet nook. A brig which had broken from her moorings was being towed back to them by a tug; large ships of war, with their topmasts struck, were rolling so that we could see their decks. We were not permitted to land, and could therefore only estimate the strength of the place by what we saw from our deck; but judging from the batteries, which extend from the water's edge to the mountain sides, Toulon is impregnable. It must be a beautiful place in summer, and highly picturesque, but on this day it looked cold and miserable in the extreme.

The rest of our voyage to Malta was rather rough, but no special event disturbed it. My older readers will not care to hear of the following incident, but doubtless the children will. It is one very common in all voyages during stormy weather and when far from the coast. Several small birds were blown out of sight of land during the gale. They were so wearied as to be easily

MALTA.

caught. One little lark was so pleased with the warmth of my hand that he sat down on it, burying his little cold feet in his feathers, and looking about with his bright eye, not in the least afraid, and as if feeling assured that he had been cast amongst kind people. These birds are always very thirsty, and drink with delight. In summer they sometimes remain on board for days, feeding upon flies, and in some cases they have been known to clear a cabin of cockroaches, a sort of ugly blackbeetle, and to get quite fat upon them.

One beautiful lark which we caught remained until we were passing close to the shore in the Straits of Bonifacio. We there let him off, and he flew away to sing again in his own green fields; but another died, and was found in the morning in his cotton bed lying on his back, his little claws curled up to the sky.

We reached Malta late on the night of the 23rd, and finding that the steamer was not to leave till three in the morning we resolved to go on shore.

FROM ENGLAND TO PALESTINE.

CHAPTER II.

A MOONLIGHT VISIT TO MALTA.

ALL the world knows Malta; yet I would not exchange my impressions of it, received during the strange hours of midnight, for the most accurate knowledge which could be obtained by daylight. Every one, the governor included, was in bed, except the sentries and a few policemen and houseless ragamuffins. The moon was shining "with the heavens all bare;" every house revealed itself, not in the clearness of noonday, which would have been a fault—few towns, and fewer men, being able to stand that sort of revelation—but in the soft and subdued silver light of the full moon, which blended wonderfully with the limestone of which the island is composed. We walked up streets which were long flights

of stairs, admired the balconies, and the innumerable bits of picturesque architecture and varied outline that everywhere met the eye, and seemed so tasteful when compared with the pasteboard rows of our prosaic streets, which are built by contract and squeezed into stupid shape by our city authorities, who seem to think that the "orders" of architecture mean all houses being alike, as policemen are.

We soon reached the side of the town which overlooks the great harbour; and though I have lost all memory of the names, if I ever heard them (which I no doubt had), of forts, streets, palaces, batteries, yet I never can forget the impression made by what Joseph Hume used to call "the tottle of the whole." We wandered along battery upon battery, passed innumerable rows of big guns, which had pyramids of shot beside them, and which looked down white precipices, as if watching the deep harbour which washed their base, and sorrowing that they had nothing to do. We saw forts—forts everywhere, forts on this side, forts on the other side, forts above us, and forts below us.

We saw, beneath us, dark forms of line-of-battle ships, like giants asleep, but ready in a moment to wake up with their thunder. Yet we saw no signs of life in the silence of midnight except a few lights skimming across the deep black water below; nor did we hear a sound except the song of the Maltese boatman who steered his gondola with its firefly lamp, and the tread of the sentinel as his bayonet gleamed in the moonlight, and the sudden question issued from his English voice, "Who goes there?"

We stood beside noble palaces, formerly inhabited by the famous knights, every ornament, every coat of arms, distinct and clear as by day; and we thought—— well, never mind our sentimentalism. We stood beside the statue of the great and good Lord Hastings, and traced his silent features between us and the sky, which revived many thoughts in me of my earliest and best friends.

STREET IN MALTA.

And thus we wandered until nearly three in the morning, in a sort of strange and mysterious dreamland; and for aught that appeared, the Grand-Master and all his knights still possessed the island, and might be seen on the morrow's morn—if we were disposed to wait for them—watching a fleet of infidel Moslem in the distance, come to disturb their peace and the peace of Europe, if not to destroy Christianity itself. And we thought—— no matter what we thought of these fine fellows!

How thankful we were that all the shops were closed, where we might have been cheated by daylight; that priests, and friars, and nuns, and sea captains, and admirals, and all the puff and parade, were snoring in their nightcaps. They would have, beyond doubt, destroyed the pleasing illusion.

After buying some delicious oranges from ever-wakeful boys, and bidding grateful farewell to our obliging guide, we returned to the *Valetta* full of thankfulness for our midnight visit to Malta. We never wish to see it again. We fear the daylight.

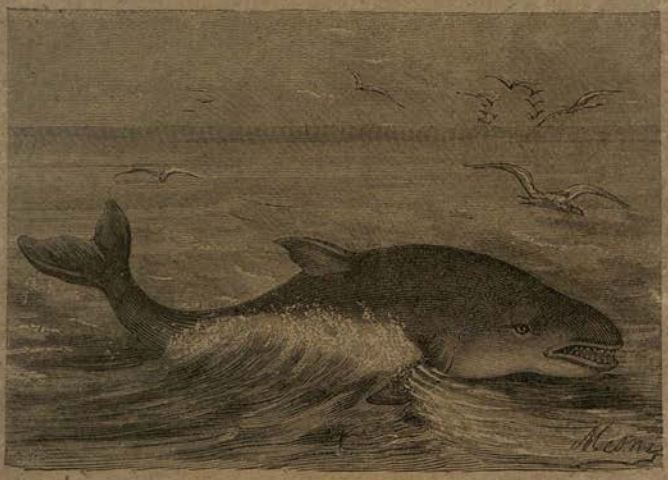
After leaving Malta we seemed to have entered another world. The sky was without a cloud; the sea was unruffled by the slightest breeze, and began to be coloured by that exquisite deep, *lapis-lazuli*-like blue which may be approached sometimes in our northern skies, but never in our northern seas. Nothing could be more beautiful than the play of the white foam as it flew from the ship's bow, or from her paddles, and fell like white pearls upon the glassy surface.

I was reminded of a similar effect at the Falls of Niagara, produced by the sparkling foam as it ran up the smooth surface of the deep water, which, like a huge green wheel of ocean, rolled over the Table Rock. In both cases, the contrast was beautiful in the extreme—between the pure white and indigo blue in the one instance, and the emerald sea-green in the other.

During our short voyage to Alexandria shoals of dolphins rose alongside of us, while once or twice flying-

fish were seen skimming the surface with silvery wings —both features significant of a change in our latitude. Strange to say, our engine, which had stood so well throughout the hurricane, broke down in the calm on two occasions. The "good tool" had no doubt been wounded in the battle with the storm.

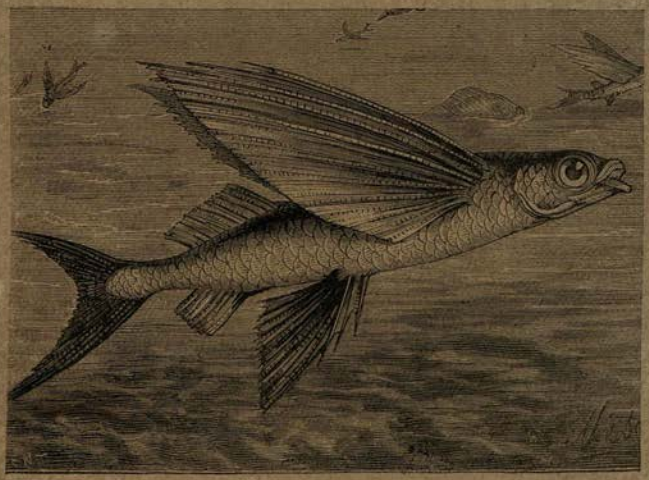
One other little fact I must not omit to mention, as



THE DOLPHIN.

evidencing the distance to which fine substances can be wafted by the air. For two days, and when out of sight of land, our course running nearly parallel to Africa, the weather rigging of the ship was all brown with fine sand, which adhered to the tar. And this was visible only on that side of the ropes next the desert.

And now for a few days we felt the perfect repose and benefit of a voyage. To one who, like myself, never suffers from nausea even, it is the most perfect rest. The busy world, we know, is getting on very well without us, and so we determine to get on without it. The post-man's knock belongs to another sphere of existence, and we hear it no more, except as in a feverish dream.



FLYING FISH.

A mighty gulf of deep water separates us from the world of letters, business, calls, meetings, appointments, committees, visits, and all like disturbers of selfish ease.

We assume, being ourselves in robust health, that all our friends are in a like condition, and are pleased to think that they lament our absence, hope to hear from us

by the next mail, and will be glad to have us home again; while sometimes we cannot but regret, with a feeling which alarms our conscience, that we do not sufficiently respond to their anxieties.

On ship-board, pleasure and necessity are one. We cannot help being idle. We may possibly exert ourselves to play draughts or backgammon, but not chess—that requires thought. To read anything is an act of condescension, and no one thinks that his duty. In fact, the word "duty" seems confined to the officers and crew, including the steward. Those portions, too, of our life which on land are made subordinate to more important things, such as our meals and sleep, at sea are made the leading events of the day. We retire at any hour to our cabin, sleep, read, meditate, as we please, and as long as we please. The brain and memory empty themselves so completely of all that has troubled or occupied them during previous periods of existence, that we seem to begin life again as children, and to be amused with the most passing trifles.

Sensible men who, a few weeks or even days before, were occupied with National affairs, become interested in the cow on board, feel her horns, scratch the back of her ears; and beg for some crumbs of bread to feed the chickens. A dog on board becomes an institution. A sea-bird attracts every eye; while a ship looming on the horizon makes all, who can stand, come on deck and watch the approaching wonder, as the Ancient Mariner watched the mysterious sail.

Who, on shore, ever thinks of the longitude or latitude of his house? Not one in fifty believes that it has either one or other: but at sea our position is known every day at twelve o'clock; and the spot upon the globe's surface which we at that moment occupy becomes a matter of serious speculation until dinner time.

We beseech wearied men never to visit Paris, to be baked on the Boulevards, sick of the Rue Rivoli, have their digestion destroyed by mushrooms and cockscombs at the Trois Frères; nor to be pestered by guides, ropes, ladders, mules, or alpenstocks, in walking across slippery glaciers, or down savage ravines in Switzerland; nor to be distracted by "Murray" in wandering from gallery to gallery, or from church to church in Italy;—but to launch upon the deep, get out of sight of land, and have their brains thoroughly invigorated by fresh air and salt water. On the forenoon of Saturday, the 27th, the seventh day from Marseilles, we sighted Alexandria.

At this time, by the kind and cordial permission of the captain, I had a religious service with the men in the forecastle, as my custom has ever been on a voyage. It had little formality in it; some were in their hammocks, most were seated around on the "bunkers," and were dimly visible under the low deck with the feeble lights. Few audiences are more attentive, more willing to learn, or more grateful for so small a kindness. We are apt to forget what these men endure for our sakes, what sacrifices are required by the necessities of their occupation, what their sore temptations and few advantages. The

least we can do when an opportunity offers itself is to speak to them of the love of a common Father and Saviour, and we know not when the seed thus cast upon the waters may spring up. It may be in the hospital among strangers, or when pacing the deck at midnight, or when clinging to a plank for life, or even when going down "with all hands."

FROM ENGLAND TO PALESTINE.

CHAPTER III.

ALEXANDRIA.

THE first sign of nearing a new country from the sea is generally the pilot-boat and its crew. With what interest do we look over the side of the ship, and watch the dresses and countenances of the first specimens of the tribe among whom we are to pitch our tents for a time!

The boat, with a flag in its bow, which pulled out to meet us from Alexandria, had a crew which were a fit introduction to the East, with their rough comfortable brown boatcoats and hood, their petticoat-trousers, swarthy faces, and shining teeth. And as for "Master George" himself, the Egyptian pilot, as he stepped up the gangway to shake hands with his old friends, and

take charge of the ship, he was, from toe to turba
a perfect study for an artist.

There is nothing at all remarkable in the view
Alexandria from the sea. Notwithstanding the wh
palace, the old summerhouse of the Pasha, and other
tinguished buildings, which are sure to be pointed
the town looks like a long horizontal streak of white
mingled with brown, and crossed perpendicularl
the sharp lines of ships' masts.

But a scene well worth noticing was the c
boats that pressed around the ship to convey p
to the shore. Imagine thirty or forty such
nondescript crews, crowding to the ship's
man on board of them appearing in a towerin
and yelling as if in the agony of despair, and, w
stretched hands and flashing eyes, pouring forth a
of guttural Arabic, that seemed to the ear to be
dictionary of imprecations without a pause, and
one could judge, without a motive, unless it
they took us for lost spirits claimable by the
demon.

The noise is great when landing from a Hig
steamer, and when Highland boatmen, the scum
port, are contending for passengers or luggage.
without defending the Gaelic as mellifluous, or the
landers as types of meekness on such an occasion
vehemence of gesticulation, in genuine power of
lung to fill the air with a roar of incomprehen
clamations, nothing on earth, so long as th

QUAY AT ALEXANDRIA.

body retains its present arrangement of muscles and nervous vitality, can surpass the Egyptians and their language.

If the Pyramids were built, as some allege they were, to preserve the inch as a measure of length for the world, why should not the Sphinx have been raised, with her calm eye, dignified face, and sweet smile, even now breaking through her ruins like sunlight through the clouds, to be an everlasting rebuke to Eastern rage, and a lesson in stone exhorting to silence?

My first day in the East stands alone in my memory, unapproached by all I have ever seen. It excited feelings of novelty and wonder which I fear can never be reproduced. I had expected very little from Alexandria, and thought of it only as a place of merchandise, notorious for donkeys, donkey-boys, and Pompey's Pillar. But as soon as I landed, I realised at once the presence of a totally different world of human beings from any I had seen before. The charm and fascination consisted in the total difference in every respect between East and West.

Passing through the utter chaos, dilapidation, and confusion of the custom-house, and clambering over, as we best could, the innumerable bales of cotton, under the protection of the blue cloudless heavens—winding our way among goods of every description, and between barrels and hampers, amid the cries and noise of the mixed multitude who crowded the wharves, filled the boats, and offered themselves as porters, guides, and

whatever else could command a *backsheesh*, we reached the outskirts of the custom-house, passed the officers, entered the bazaar, and had time to look around.

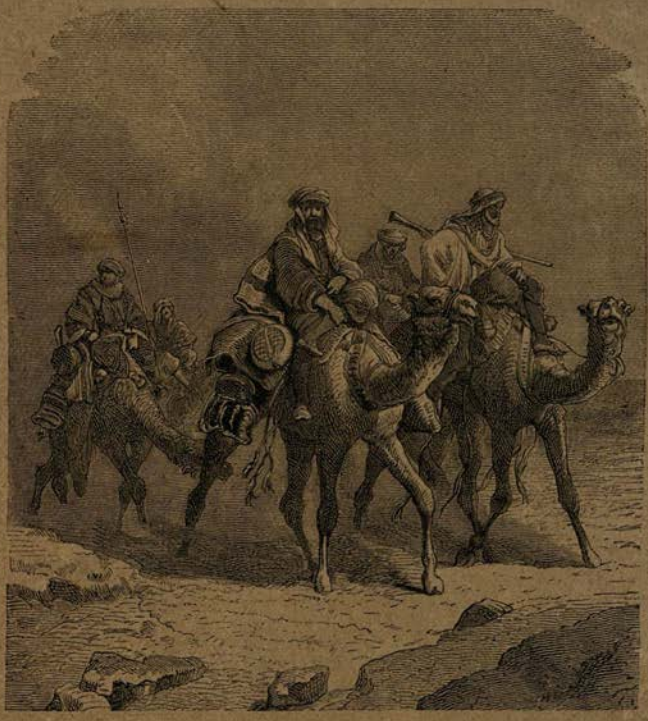
The first impression made upon a European, is, as I have said, that he has never seen anything at all like it. The shops, with various kinds of goods displayed behind a man who is seated cross-legged, willing to sell them apparently as a favour, hardly attract the eye any more than open cupboards would do. But the persons who crowd along the narrow lane! Only look at them! They are manifestly from all parts of the earth—Greeks, Turks, Jews, Armenians, Hindoos, Copts, Arabs, Nubians, Albanians, drunken Jack Tars, English officers on the way to or from India, &c. With the exception of the Europeans, each man appears in his own distinct individuality of face and raiment.

In America there is a Yankee type everywhere visible, with lips, nose, cheeks, and hair by no means romantic, though business-like; in Russia there is a Muscovite type, which admits of little variety; and everywhere, from the Mississippi to the Volga, there is a certain uniformity of face, or at all events of dress; coats and trousers with buttons, long tails or short tails, hats or caps—a sort of Caucasian respectability.

But here, each face seems to stand alone. There are eyes and foreheads, noses and beards, colours of skin, peculiarities of expression—the sly, the dignified, the rascally, the ignorant, the savage, the refined, the contented, the miserable—giving each face its own distinct

place in the globe. And there is, if possible, a greater variety in costume.

Every man seems to have studied his own taste, or his



ARABS FROM THE DESERT.

own whim, or, possibly, his own religion, in the shape, colour, and number of his garments. The jackets, the pelisses or dressing-gowns, the waistcoats, the petticoats,

the inexpressibles, the sashes, the turbans, the headgear, each and all are different in colour and in details of arrangement.

The arms, whether dirk or dagger, single pistols, or half a dozen, modern, or as old as the invention of gunpowder, sword, gun, or spear—each has its own peculiar form and arrangement, so that every Eastern has to a Western a novelty and picturesqueness which are indescribable.

And the motley crowd presses along: fat, contented, oily Greek merchants, or majestic Turks, on fine horses splendidly caparisoned, or on aristocratic donkeys, that would despise to acknowledge as of the same race the miserable creatures which bray in our coal-carts; bare-legged donkey-boys, driving their more plebeian animals before them; Arabs from the desert, with long guns and gipsy-like coverings, stalking on in silence; beggars, such as one sees in the pictures of the old masters—verily "poor and needy, blind and naked;" insane persons, with idiotic look, and a few rags covering their bronzed bodies, seeking alms; Greek priests, Coptic priests, and Latin priests; doctors of divinity and dervishes; little dumpy women with their peculiar waddling gait, wrapt in white muslin sheets, their eyes only visible; and towering over all this strange throng are strings of camels, lank and lean, so patient-looking and submissive, pacing on under their loads of cotton, with bent heads and sleepy eyes, their odd-looking drivers mounted high above, rocking with that peculiar motion which the camel's pace

produces—all this, and infinitely more, formed a scene that looked like a fancy fair got up for the amusement of strangers.

Before leaving the bazaar, let us look into this coffee-shop open from the street. There is no ornament of

WOMEN—RIDING AND WALKING.

any kind in it, nor does it aim at the magnificence and glitter seen in our whisky and gin shops at home—such palaces being unknown in the East. It is of the humblest description, having no ornament of any kind but a few mats on its floor and upon its raised dais. Capital is not

required—a little charcoal, a coffee-pot, and some coffee forming the whole stock in trade.

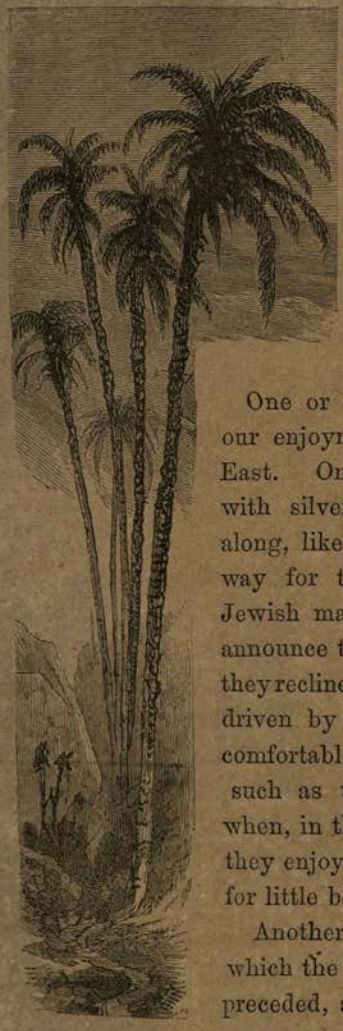
Odd-looking, turbaned men, smoking their nargiles, are each a picture of quiet contentment. But the chief attraction to me was a blind man, who sat cross-legged on the dais, with a rude sort of fiddle, on which, resting it perpendicularly on his knee, he played a monotonous accompaniment to his chant. He was apparently an *improvisatore*, who had to think for a little time before composing his verse, or more probably he was only a reciter of old Arab poems. While chanting and scraping on the fiddle, there was a smile of good-humour on his face. No sooner were two or three lines repeated, than his audience exhibited the greatest satisfaction, and turned their eyes to a young man who sat on the opposite dais, quietly smoking—a competitor, apparently, with the blind musician and ballad-singer. He seemed sometimes puzzled for a moment, as he blew a few rapid whiffs from his pipe, while the blind man listened with the greatest attention. But no sooner was his response given than a general movement was visible among the auditors, who turned to the blind minstrel as if saying, "Match that, old fellow, if you can!"

Along the whole bazaar there were little episodes of this sort, presenting features of social life totally different from our own. My excellent friend laughed heartily at my enthusiasm, assuring me that I would think nothing of all this by the time I reached Damascus, and begged I would come away, as we must have a drive and see a

few sights before dinner; although, to tell the truth, I was much more pleased with the sort of sights around me than with the prospect of beholding even Pompey's Pillar.

Obeying orders, we were soon in the square, or long parallelogram which forms the respectable part of the town and where the chief hotels are situated; but it had no more interest for me than Euston Square. Not so the drive.

Soon after leaving the hotel we were again in the East, with its dust, poverty, picturesqueness, and confusion. We visited an old Greek church, which had been excavated out of a mass of débris. We gazed with interest upon its walls dimly frescoed with Christian subjects, and looked into its dark burial vaults, and thought of "the Alexandrian school," and of those who had worshipped, probably more than a thousand years ago, in this old edifice. We passed lines of camel-hair tents perched upon a rising ground and occupied by the Bedouin, who had come from the desert, perhaps to buy or to sell; we passed the brown clay huts of the Fellaheen, with their yelling dogs and naked children; we passed crowds of donkeys bearing water-skins, resembling black pigs that had been drowned and were oozing with water; we saw with delight that feature of the East—groves of palms (needing no glass to cover them) drooping their feathered heads in the sunny sky; we stood, where many generations had stood before, beneath what is called Pompey's Pillar, and repeated the speculations of past ages as to how it could have been



erected there, what a glorious portico that must have been of which it had formed a unit, and what a magnificent temple it must have adorned. We then returned to the square from which we had started, feeling more and more that we were in a new world.

One or two other sights added to our enjoyment of this first day in the East. One was a bare-legged *syce* with silver-headed cane, who flew along, like an ostrich, to clear the way for the carriage of his noble Jewish master and mistress, and to announce their august presence, while they reclined in their handsome chariot, driven by a Nubian charioteer, with comfortable satisfaction in their look, such as their ancestors manifested when, in the same country long ago, they enjoyed leeks and garlic, wishing for little better.

Another sight was a funeral, in which the body was carried on a bier, preceded, as the custom is, by blind

men, and followed by relatives, and women as hired mourners who did their duty well, giving loud lamentations for their money. And another was a marriage pro-

WATER BOTTLE.

cession, in which the bridegroom was going for his bride with lanterns and wild Turkish screaming instruments intended to represent music. And having seen all this

we joined European society at the *table d'hôte* at a late hour, and fell again into the old grooves of modern civilisation.

After taking a short stroll to look at the stars, and observing that there was as yet no gas in Alexandria with all its progress and wealth, but that every one was obliged by law to carry a lantern, we retired to bed.

We met there with some friends, whose acquaintance we had made in other portions of the civilised world; but, fortunately, owing to the cool state of the weather, they did not press their company upon us so as to be numbered amongst the plagues of Egypt. It was many years since we had met the genuine mosquito; but who that has once experienced it, can forget the nervous shock which runs through the body when his sharp "ping" is heard close to the ear as he blows his trumpet for battle! To open the net curtains in order to drive a single enemy out, is probably to let a dozen in; and once they are in, how difficult to discover the aerial imps! and, when discovered, how difficult to get at them! and when all this labour has been gone through, and the curtains are again tucked in, and every crevice closed, and the fortress made secure, and the hope indulged that the enemy has fled, and the sweet feeling of unctuous repose again mesmerises soul and body —oh, horror, to hear again at *both* ears "ping, ping-ing!"

On this first night we did battle with intense energy and bravery against one intruder, and having slain him we were at peace; but then came the barking of the dogs —those ceaseless serenaders of Eastern cities, of which more anon—and then sleep.

FROM ENGLAND TO PALESTINE.

CHAPTER IV.

CAIRO AND THE PYRAMIDS.

ALTHOUGH Alexandria is the starting point for Palestine (our ultimate destination) yet who could be in it without seeing Cairo, and who could be in Cairo without seeing the Pyramids, and going the usual round of travellers since the deluge or thereabouts? So we found ourselves at the railway station *en route* to Cairo and the Pyramids.

The delta, as a shoreless ocean of flat, rich land, presented no feature to us of greater interest than a similar expanse of cultivated loam in England, Belgium, or anywhere else. But there ever and anon appeared those unmistakable signs of the old East which linked us to the past and belong not to modern Europe, on which we

had now turned our backs. There were, of course, the graceful palms and other trees of eastern foliage fringing the horizon and reposing in the calm delicious air. There were camels ploughing—a combination, by the way, which seemed to me as unnatural as a pig in harness, for though the creature submitted with patient drudgery, it had nevertheless the look of an upper servant out of place—an old huntsman or whipper-in of a gallant pack driving a coal cart.

As we passed along at a slow rate, we saw other symptoms of a very different life from what we had been accustomed to, such as brown, dusty, crumbling, poverty-stricken, mud villages, built upon mounds of rubbish to keep them out of the inundation, with their squalid hovels, whitewashed mosques, and odd-looking inhabitants, male and female, and the pigeon villages, where those birds are reared in flocks for the market, their nests being clay pots built into a peculiarly-shaped second story with square walls inclining inwards, like the old Egyptian buildings. We also passed half-naked men swinging between them, with regular motion, a sort of basket by which they raised water from a ditch on a lower level to one on a higher, which distributed it over the whole field. We also passed water mills for the same purpose turned by oxen, camels, or horses; and frequently we passed Mussulmans at their devotions.

Arrived at Cairo, we went of course to Shepherd's Hotel. To get clear of the railway terminus, however, was by no means easy. The crush of donkey boys, omni-

buses, carriages, and camels, with the crowd of non-

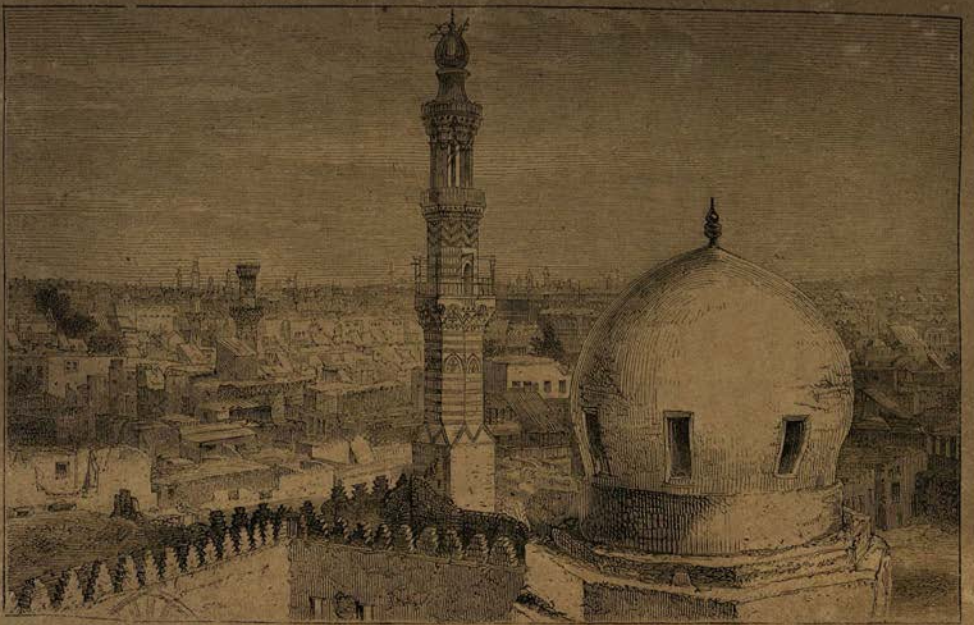
ATTITUDES OF THE MAHOMETAN DURING HIS DEVOTIONS.

descript characters, raised such a storm of sound and

such clouds of dust and of doubt, as made the "situation" for a moment bewildering. But once in the hotel we are again in Europe.

The verandah at Shepherd's had its own story to tell, and any man could read it. It is the Isthmus of Suez on a small scale—a traveller's link between India and Europe, with the addition of a few square yards which serve as a platform to connect the invalid houses of the cold north with the heating breath of the genial south. Here one meets young lads who have passed their examinations at Addiscombe dressed up à la mode, from canvas shoes to cambric-covered hats. They are, upon the whole, nice, clean-looking fellows, with a gentlemanly bearing about them, and an inocent puppyism, pipe included, which ceases in the eye of charity to be offensive on the verge of the real difficulties in life, which one knows they are about to encounter.

Who would refuse a pipe or a snuff to a man before his going into battle? But what care these boys for leaving home? "Ain't it jolly?" No, my boys, I know better; it ain't jolly, but, as you would say, "seedy." In spite of all your pluck, I know you have just written to your fathers or mothers with a tear which you would be ashamed to confess, hating to be thought "muffs." You have forced yourselves to declare for their sakes, "how happy you are;" yet you would give worlds to be back again for an hour even at home, and would hug the old dog and almost kiss the old butler. I'll wager that that merry lad, with blue eyes and fair hair, has written to his



CAIRO, WITH THE RUINED MOSQUE OF TALOON.

sister Charlotte, who is watching for the mail, telling her to keep up her heart for he will be able very soon to return on leave. And he has sent a single line to Jack, telling him that he may have the use of all his bats and guns and fishing-rods, and whatever he has left behind him, for though he had his little tiffs with Jack at home, Jack, in spite of his this or that, seems now perfection in his brother's memory. And the lad begs also to be remembered, in a quiet, confidential way, to a certain young lady whom he is ashamed to name, but whom he verily believes will never marry another, but wait his return from India. God bless the boys, and bring them out of fever and gunshot wounds to the old folks at home.

Meeting these fresh boys from the west are worn-out, sallow-complexioned veterans returning from the East. Among them are men whose fame is associated only with the dangers of sport with tigers and wild boars, or with the gaieties of the station. But just as likely among those quiet looking gentlemen may be more than one who has governed a province as large as England, and been a king in the East, and been almost worshipped by wild tribes whom he has judged in righteousness and ruled with clemency. And they are returning to a country where old friends, who parted from them full of life and hope, are long ago buried, and they will visit "the old home" no more, for it is in the hands of strangers, while such of them as are bachelors will henceforth be frequenters of oriental clubs, and be known as "old

Indians," who are supposed to be peculiar and crotchety. There are few nobler gentlemen on earth, after all, than these same "old Indians." Look at those two fine specimens with pith hats, brown faces, and long grey moustaches. They are very silent, and look sometimes as if they were sulky, but their hearts are sound, though their livers are the reverse, and I respect even their growls, that seem to me like harmless thunder, without lightning, after a long sultry day.

And now, leaving Cairo and mounted on very good donkeys, selected by a nice lad named Hassan, a well-known hanger-on at the hotel, and one of John Bull's "rascals, sir!" we set off for the Pyramids.

The first view of the Nile here was to me singularly enjoyable. Indeed, the first view of a great historical river is always most interesting. It is one of those features of a country which is as unchangeable as the mountains, and is always associated with its history as the permanent highway of all generations, requiring no repair and incapable of decay. And here was the Nile! It is one of the locks of snowy hair on the old head of the world. Reminiscences began to crowd upon the mind, from Moses to Captain Speke, and one ever and anon wished to convince himself of the fact that this was really the ancient river of history. Yet all the objects which met the eye and filled in the view were appropriate. There were picturesque boats and palm-trees on the further shore, and over them were the grey Pyramids rearing their heads a few miles off. What more could we

ask to make up a real Egyptian landscape in harmony with one's ideal?

After crossing the ferry and traversing a flat plain on the western shore with villages and groves of palm-trees, we reached at last an open space with nothing between us and the Pyramids. The first thing that strikes one is, not their size, for that cannot be measured by the eye, but the high platform on which they stand. It is about one hundred and thirty feet above the level of the green flat of the delta, and in the midst of a pure sandy desert. "I never thought they were among the sand or so high up; did you?" "I thought they would have looked far larger, did not you?" "Where in the world is the sphinx?" "There she is." "What! that little round ball rising above the sand?" These are the sort of questions or replies which one hears, if anything be spoken at all, as he moves towards those venerable mounds.

We found the strip of land which separates the Pyramids from the green valley to be much broader than it at first seemed. It was thus well on in the day when we reached our destination, and the heat was consequently greater than we had made up our minds for. We made for the sphinx first, and went round and round her. She appeared like a huge boulder rising out of the sand. I did all in my power to realize the calm majesty, the dignity, serenity, etc., of that strange creature's expression, but I gave it up in despair. She seemed to me to be an Egyptian Mrs. Conrady, whom no power could

invest with beauty. I envy those who can enjoy her smiles. She may have been a theological Venus in the days of the patriarchs, but a most gigantic small-pox from the battering-rams of Cambyses, or the fierce anger of some invader, has destroyed the smoothness of her skin. I regret my insensibility to her charms, but I can't help it. She is still a riddle to me.

The nearer we approached the Great Pyramid, the more it rose upon us as a revelation of majesty and power. When it was proposed to me to ascend it I agreed as a matter of course, and when one of our party kindly hinted at the difficulty, I looked up to the artificial mole-hill, and swaggering about my exploits on Highland and Swiss mountains, I expanded my chest, drew myself upright, and pitied the scepticism of my fellow-traveller. The offer of the Arabs to help me up I rejected with a smile of quiet assurance and contempt. Walking along the base of the structure, which seemed interminable, we got upon the first ledge, and began the ascent.

Half-a-dozen bare-armed, lightly-clad, dark complexioned, white-teethed, children of the desert surrounded me —measuring me with their eyes, and jabbering irreverently in Arabic about my size, I believe, but they ended by volunteering their assistance. Their speech was interlarded with the one word which constantly occurs and forms an important portion of the language of modern Egypt and Canaan—*backsheesh*. I begged them courteously to leave me, and with an elasticity remarkable to no one but myself, I mounted the first step. Having done so, I felt entitled to

THE GREAT PYRAMID.

pause and breathe, for this first step seemed to be a five feet wall of limestone. To my amazement I found another before me, and another and another, each of which I climbed, with the assistance, I confess, of the Arabs—two before and three behind—but with a constantly diminishing sense of strength and an increasing anxiety to know when I should reach those short, easy steps which I had been gazing at from below. I was told that the steps to the summit were all like those I had passed, but I was also told not to be discouraged thereby, as by hard work, I should be a good way up in half an hour, and once up I could rest so as to be fit for the descent, which after all was the real difficulty. I gazed up to a series of about two hundred stone walls which, after reaching to an elevation of 120 feet higher than the ball of St. Paul's, were lost at last in the blue sky, and I looked down half dizzy to the base beneath me.

The next wall above me was somewhere about my chest or chin. So meditating upon the vanity of human wishes, upon the loss to my parish (so argued the flesh) by a vacancy, upon the inherent excellence of humility, the folly of pride and simple ambition, I then in a subdued but firm tone declared that no arguments with which I was then acquainted would induce me to go a yard higher. I pleaded principle, but strengthened my convictions by pointing to the burning sun and the absence of a ladder. Bidding therefore farewell to my companions, who went up those giant stairs, I begged my clamorous guides, who clung around, to leave me until they returned. The obvious terror of the

Arabs was that they would lose their pay, but I mustered breath enough to say in the blandest manner, "Beloved friends and fellow labourers! sons of the desert, followers of the false prophet, leave me, go round the corner. I wish to meditate upon the past; depart." And then I emphatically added, "*Backsheesh, backsheesh, backsheesh!* Yes." They seemed to understand the latter part of my address, held up their fingers and responded, "*Backsheesh?* yes!" I bowed. "Good," they replied, "we are satisfied," and vanished.

And so they left me some twenty steps up the Pyramid and looking towards Ethiopia and the sources of the Nile. I was thankful for the repose. One had time to take in the scene in quiet, and to get a whiff from the inexhaustible past in that wondrous spot. The Arabs away, everything was calm as the grave, except for the howls of a wandering jackal that, like a speck, was trotting away over the tawny sand beneath me.

As to what one's thoughts are in such a place, I believe they are very different from those one would anticipate, or which are suggested by memory in seclusion afterwards. Instead of receiving present impressions, we possibly try to pump up emotions deemed suitable to the occasion. We gaze upon the mountain of stone around us, on the Sphinx at our feet, and on the green valley of the Nile; we recall early readings about the wonders of the world, of travels in Egypt, and stories of the big Pyramid, and we ask, "Are we really here? Are these the things which stirred our hearts long ago?" and then

trying possibly to gauge the depths of time since these pyramids were erected, we place historical milestones a few centuries apart, putting the first down at the period of the Reformation, then jogging up to the Crusades, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, the Old Testament times, those of Joseph and his brethren, until we reach Abraham. We then look at the big stones about us and say, "these were placed here long before Abraham." Then we begin to ask, "Who built them? What were they built for? and who on earth was Cheops?" And then possibly some shells in the limestone attract the eye, and we ask, "When were the occupants of these alive?" and we thus get past Adam and Eve into the infinite cycles of geologists, until at last the chances are that one gets bewildered and dreamy, and mutters with Byron :—

> "Let not a monument give you or me hopes,
> Since not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops."

Yet confessedly, few can escape in such circumstances an awed feeling of vast and unknown antiquity, or fail to hear faint echoes from the tide of human life that chafed against these immortal walls before history began. I doubt not a great part of the charm which fascinates us in such scenes arises from the consciousness of human brotherhood which all historical countries suggest, of the existence long since of beings like ourselves, men who planned and laboured, lived and died thousands of years ago, but are yet alive somewhere, and with whom, could they only start into life now, we would be able to sympa-

thise. After all, *persons* are the life of this world, and a personal God the life of the universe.

While leaving the Pyramid, the famous passage from dear old Sir Thomas Browne's "Chapter on Mummies" came to my memory:—"Time sadly overcometh all things, and is now dominant—and sitteth on a sphinx, and looketh unto Memphis and old Thebes; while his sister oblivion reclineth semi-somnous on a Pyramid, gloriously triumphing, making puzzles of Titanian erections, and turning old glories into dreams. History sinketh beneath her cloud. The traveller as he passeth amazedly through those deserts asketh of her, who built them? And she mumbleth something, but what it is he knoweth not!"

I must pass over many other sights in Cairo. "If time permitted"—as public speakers say at a late hour—I could gossip about the magnificent tombs of the Caliphs, the citadel, and the splendid view of the city from its walls, with the mosques and busy streets at our feet, like Mahometan ant-hills, and with the hazy Libyan desert, and the Pyramids in the distant shore beyond the dark inlet of the Delta.

But let us, before leaving, pay a farewell visit to its bazaars. A walk of a quarter of an hour across the open space before the hotel and through nameless streets, with little interest save to the Franks, brings us into those crowded arcades of merchandise. They are broader, higher, more aristocratic, and richer than those of Alexandria, and are the most picturesque we have seen

Not so out-and-out Oriental, critics say, as those of Damascus, but, to a stranger who cannot detect the true signs of genuine Orientalism they are fully more interesting. They are partially covered at the top with matting

ONE OF THE RICHER CLASS.

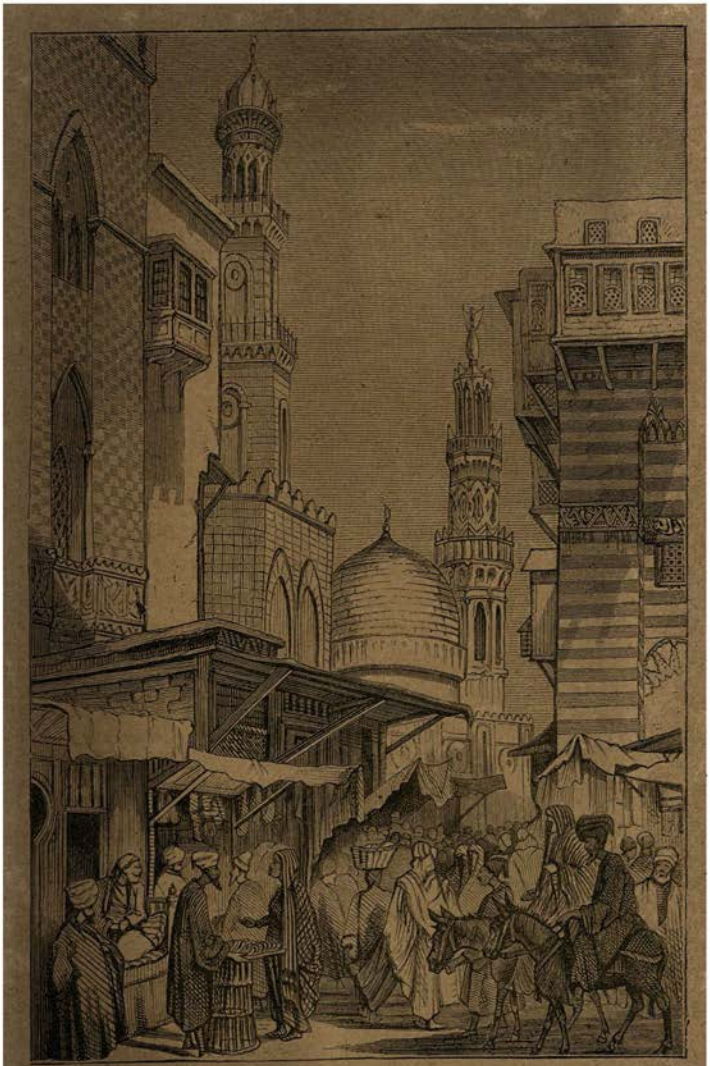
A WOMAN OF THE POORER CLASS.

THE POORER CLASS.

or palm-leaves, to keep out the glare of the sun and to produce coolness. Every trade has its own "location," and birds of a feather here flock together, whether gunsmiths, butchers, coppersmiths, or shoemakers, dealers in soft goods or hardware, pipes or tobacco, horse gear, groceries, carpets, or confections.

The people who crowd these bazaars, in their various costumes of many colours, are always a source of intense interest. The most striking points in the buildings are the balconies, which in some cases almost meet from opposite sides of the street; but there is an endless variety of quaint tumble-down bits of architecture, with fountains and gateways shutting in the different quarters, while the mosques, with their high walls and airy minarets, overlook all. Ever and anon we saw vistas along narrow crowded lanes, and views into back courts and caravanserais, with such groupings of men and camels, merchants and slaves, horses and donkeys, Bedouins and Nubians, mingled with such brilliant colours, from Persian carpets and shawls, such bright lights and sharply defined shadows, as made every yard in our progress exciting, and tempted us to sit down as often as possible on some bench or shop-front to enjoy the inimitable picturesqueness of the scene.

As to the dogs which throng the streets, they are a great Eastern Institution, constantly present in all its magnitude to the eye and ear of the traveller. The Cairo dogs, so far as I could judge, belong to the same pariah race, in form and feature, as those of other Eastern cities. They are ugly brutes, without any domestic virtues, and without culture or breeding; coarse-skinned, blear-eyed, and scrubby-tailed. They lead an independent public life, owe no allegiance to any master or mistress, not even to any affectionate boy or girl. They have no idea of human companionship, and could not conceive the possibility of



STREET SCENE IN CAIRO.

enjoying a walk with man or woman, nor of playing with children, mourning a master's absence, or barking wildly on his return home. They are utterly heathen, and never, like our decent sheep dogs, enter church or mosque. No tradition has ever reached them of any of their tribe having entered a house, even as a tolerated beggar, far less as a welcome guest or honoured friend. To have built the Pyramids or reigned at Memphis would not appear to them more absurd than their possession of such aristocratic privileges. They are kindly treated by the public in so far as good goes, yet not as friends, but only as despised wretches, the depth of whose degradation is made to measure the charity of those who deign to show mercy to them. We saw six of them watching patiently a poor man at breakfast. How low must their self-respect have sunk! Alms, when bestowed even generously, are received without any genial wag of the tail. That caudal appendage has no expression in it, its sympathetic affection is gone. Their political organisation is loose, though a kind of republic exists among them, made up of confederate states, each state being a particular quarter of the town, and independent of every other. They cannot rise to the idea of *United* States. Thus, if any dog wanders beyond the limit of his own district, he is pursued by the tribe upon whom he has presumed to intrude, and is worried until he returns home, to gnaw his own stale bones, consume his own stale offal, and be supported by his own niggers. These four-footed beasts have no home, no kennel, no barrel even which they can

call their own. A rug, a carpet, or even a bed of straw, is an unheard-of luxury. They live day and night in the streets. Miserable creatures! I don't believe the smallest skye terrier would acknowlege them as belonging to his race, but, proud as a piper, would snarl past them with erect tail, and a low growl of dogmatic unbelief in the idenity of the species, and of insulted dignity at the notion of a return bark being expected from him.

We had one thing more to do ere we left Cairo for Palestine, and that was to hire a dragoman. There were many applicants. These men are constantly prowling about the Hotel; they scent the prey afar off, they meet you in the lobbies, sidle up to you under the Verandah, tap at the door of your bedroom, beg pardon in French, Italian or English, all equally bad; ask if you "want a dragoman," produce an old book of certificates, signed by the various parties with whom they have travelled, and profess to be ready to proceed with you at a moment's notice to Jerusalem or Timbucto. Dragomen are, by the catholic consent of all travellers, considered as scoundrels. But I am inclined to dissent from this as from most sweeping generalisations regarding classes of men. It is alleged of a Scotch traveller, that when told at Cairo by his companion that they must get a dragoman, he asked, "What kind of beast's that?"

Now I know that some travellers have started on the assumption that the dragoman is but a beast, though a necessary one, for the journey; and from want of confidence have suspected, accused, and worried him,

threatened him with appeals to the consul, and such like, without any adequate cause, and thus have helped to produce the very selfishness and dishonesty and "want of interest in the party" which they accuse him of. Hadji Ali, who was employed by the Prince of Wales on his tour, offered himself to us, and was accepted; and so, having settled that important point, we left Cairo on Saturday for Alexandria, gratefully acknowledging that we had never in one week seen so much to interest us, or to furnish thought for after years.

FROM JAFFA TO JERUSALEM.

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The vessel was crowded with "pilgrims," coming from Mecca I believe, though I cannot be positive. What interested me most on here meeting, for the first time, with a freight of pilgrims, was their great numbers and their strange habits on shipboard. They were spread everywhere over the decks in family groups, leaving only narrow paths barely sufficient for sailors or curious passengers to move along without treading on them. They lay huddled up in carpets and coverings with the sort of quiet submission to their position which good Europeans manifest in yielding themselves up to death and the grave. Whether they slept, meditated, or were in utter unconsciousness, it is difficult to say; for during most of the day few seemed to attempt to move or shake themselves loose from their place of rest.

When the sun shone bright in the morning or evening, and the ship was not uneasy, there was a general rising up of turbans like flowers from the variegated beds of a garden. Nargiles were then produced, lights were passed, bags, handkerchiefs, or other repositories opened, and bread, with figs, garlic, or some other condiment, divided by the old bearded Turkey cock and his hen among their young in the nest around them. It was marvellous to see, as we noticed afterwards on longer voyages than this, how little suffices to satisfy the wants of Orientals.

The one half of the quarter-deck was tented with canvas, and set apart for the more aristocratic portion of the pilgrims; but, except for the darting out and in of some young black-eyed girl or slave who supplied them

with water, the long tent was as still as the grave. So still, indeed, did some of those Easterns keep, so submissive and patient were they under all pressure of circumstances, that on one occasion when I went to enjoy the quiet and the fresh breeze at the vessel's bow, and sat on the fore jib, which had been hauled down and stowed, I sprang up in alarm on finding it to move under me. I discovered to my horror that I had been sitting for some time on a Moslem! He survived the pressure; nay, smiled at my expression of alarm. I hope he has not suffered since.

We were rather doubtful as to where we should be put ashore, for the landing at Jaffa is not always to be depended upon. There is no port for the steamer to enter; and if the weather be at all rough, boats cannot leave the harbour: and should they be able to do so, there is often much danger in entering it again, as the passage through the reef of rocks is very narrow, and boats are apt to ship a sea from the breakers, and thus be swamped.

Fortunately the weather was propitious. This settled the case in favour of Jaffa, or old Joppa.

On the afternoon of Tuesday we were approaching the Holy Land, and straining our eyes to get a first glimpse of its everlasting hills.

The sun was setting as we descried the long low line of the Palestine coast. It had set when we blew off our steam, a mile or so from the shore. The twinkling lights of boats were then seen like stars coming towards us, and

soon the port officials stood on deck demanding a clean bill of health; and this being produced, boat after boat came clustering to the ship's side.

Then arose an indescribable Babel from the screeching of their crews, who seemed engaged in some fierce and

JAFFA.

deadly strife of words, which was itself an interesting study, until, after a while, amidst the roaring of steam and of voices, we were by degrees carried along over the side and down to a boat, in a current of sailors, Turks,

Arabs, passengers, portmanteaus, dragomen, and travellers, while officers and captain were at the gangway acting a pantomime in despair, vociferating Russian louder than the steam, stamping their feet, grasping their hair, and appearing half apoplectic with their efforts to be heard. It was a great relief to be off from the ship's side (though more than once I thought unpleasantly of Jonah) and to pull for the old shore.

Our landing-place was a shelf of wood projecting overhead, under which our boat was brought, and from which a dozen hands of unknown and, in the darkness, dimly visible Arabs, were stretched down to help me up. I was quite alive to the "slip between the cup and the lip," but somehow, though not without difficulty, I was dragged to land, and found myself in Palestine. I cannot say that I was wanting in emotion, yet it was emotion in no way kindled by the spot I trod upon, but by the villanous crowd who surrounded me, forcing every thought into one uncontrollable desire to be delivered from these Philistines. We soon got clear of the town, and then as we paced along on the yielding, sandy road, with a rich aroma perfuming the air from orange groves and other odoriferous trees, the fact began to dawn slowly upon me that I was at last really in the Holy Land and treading the Plain of Sharon.

I ascended the house-top alone at night, and then—how could it be else?—the delightful feeling grew upon me—"I am in Palestine! This is no dream!" Little could be seen except the stars, which scintillated in the

calm brilliancy of an Eastern night. The deep silence of the night was broken only by the sea, which came booming in low hollow sounds from the shore, as it did in the days of Jonah, or as when heard by Peter while journey-

EASTERN HOUSE-TOPS.

ing from Jaffa to Cæsarea along the whole sandy tract which passed near our dwelling.

Early next morning we went to Jaffa, and then for the first time I saw "the Land" under the full blaze of the sun. The atmosphere was delicious, and the sky cloudless. The first impression made upon me, as upon every

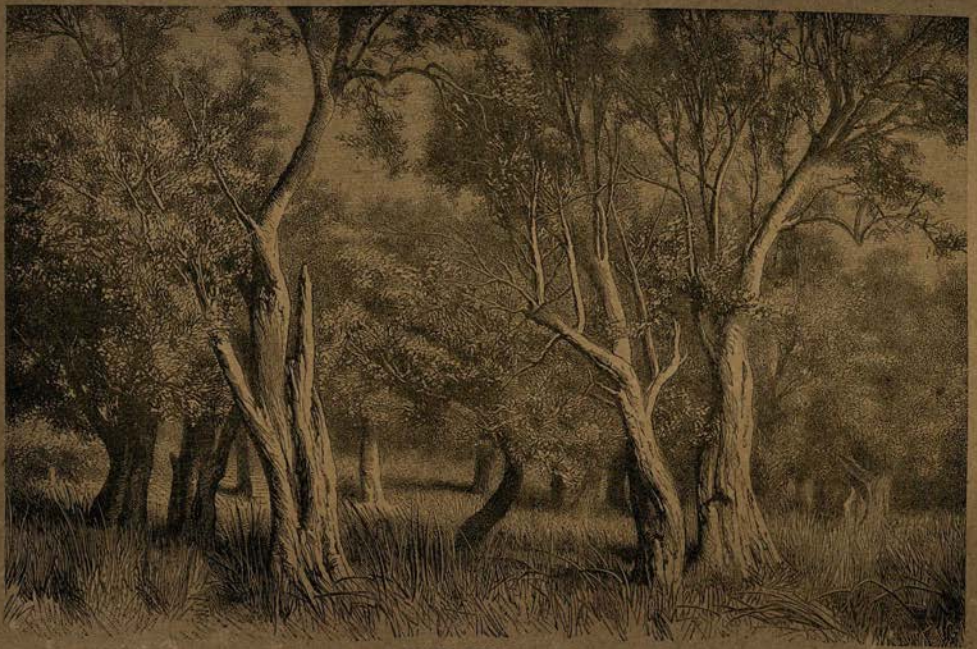
traveller, was the marvellous richness, the orchard-beauty of the neighbourhood.

The path wound between rows of cacti (the *opuntia*), or prickly pear, varying from three or four to fifteen feet in height; and one could not help pausing to look at their great soft fibrous stems fringed with leaves (?) resembling thick green cakes or "bannocks" stuck with needles, and forming a defence through which the breeze can pass in full volume, but quite impervious to man or beast.

The gardens of fruit-bearing trees are the glory of Jaffa. There are endless groves of oranges and lemons, apricots, pomegranates, figs, and olives, with mulberry and acacia trees, the stately palm towering above them all. I was informed that there are about three hundred and fifty gardens around this old town, the smallest being three or four acres in extent, the largest ten or twelve.

Of these gardens two hundred and fifty have one well, and about a hundred two wells each. Each well employs about three animals, who work day and night for six months in the year, and draw each about one thousand cubic feet of water in the twenty-four hours. This gives one some idea of the "water-privileges," as the Yankees would say, of the Plain of Sharon; and I believe the same abundance of water is procurable from the whole of the Philistian plain, which accounts for its present fertility, and, to some extent, for its ancient wealth and the number its inhabitants.

About eight millions of oranges are grown every year



OLIVE GARDEN.

in the gardens around Jaffa. Several hundreds are borne by a single tree, and are sold wholesale at an average of little more than three-pence the hundred. In retail, ten are sold for a penny in Jaffa. An orange-grove gave me the idea of rich and luxurious fruitfulness more than any other sight I ever beheld. The number of oranges which can hang from a single branch is remarkable. The accompanying engraving is an exact representation in size and all respects of a twig I broke off with four clustered on it.

The size, too, of the fruit is extraordinary, averaging ten to twelve inches in circumference, while some reach seventeen inches. Even the apricots, we were informed, sometimes attain the size of fifteen inches. The colour, as well as the size of the fruit, and the immense clusters which loaded every tree, made the grove much more impressive than the vineyard, in spite of all its hanging bunches of luscious grapes.

We saw them harvesting the fruit. It was carried by merry boys and girls, in large basketfuls, and laid in heaps.

I confess that my first thought was what a paradise th would be for our Sunday-school children on their annual holiday. What a luxury to be allowed, not to suck the sour fruit purchased with their only half-penny from a barrow in the street, but to bury their whole face, gratis, in a succession of those immense fountains of ripe and delicious juice! Milk and honey would be nothing to it. *They* would never feel disappointed with Palestine!

The only disappointing thing about an orange-grove, or any garden which I saw in the East, was the roughness of the ground. It is cut up into trenches for the purpose of irrigation. Velvety grass exists not: this would make the retreat perfect.

Outside of the gate of Jaffa was a place I would have liked well to have lingered at. It is a large open space, vanishing into the country, and filled with all the picturesque Oriental nondescripts to whom I have alluded in former pages, and who, from crown to heel, had to me an undying interest. To the usual crowd which was ever moving in that open space, with camels, donkeys, horses, and oxen, were added troops of horses which for weeks and months had been constantly passing from every part of the country along the plain, by the old road to Egypt, *viâ* Gaza, to supply the immense losses sustained there from the murrain. Most of those we saw were very inferior cattle, and represented but the dregs of the land, yet they were selling at high, and, for the East, exorbitant prices. The strange-looking characters that accompanied them represented the lowest conceivable grade of horse-

dealers: their faces being a study for the physiognomist as well as the artist. We preferred studying them by sunlight rather than moonlight.

The first place in Jaffa which the traveller naturally desires to visit is the traditional house of Simon the tanner, in which the Apostle Peter lived. A portion of it at least is evidently a modern building, but if it is not the old house, it is nevertheless well worth visiting from the characteristic view which is obtained from its flat roof. Standing there, I felt myself for the first time brought into local contact, as it were, with those persons and facts in Gospel history with which every Christian is familiar.

The house is close to the sea-wall, and looks to the south. The whole landscape, as seen from the roof, is instructive. Along that winding shore, and not far from the town, tanners still ply their trade: and they may have done so since the days of the Apostle.

The great sea, whose blue waves danced before us in the sunlight, and spread themselves to the horizon to wash the shores of Europe beyond, seemed also to partake of the light shed from the vision revealed to the inner eye of the Apostle when praying beneath this blue sky. He had gazed on this sea, unchanged since then in its features, and unwrinkled by time; but as he did so, he little knew what endless blessings of Christian consolation and of spiritual life were given to our Western world in promise, and let down from Heaven with that wide sheet! The lesson thus symbolically

taught, filled him with pain as it destroyed his past, but fills us with gratitude as it secured our future.

Nor could we forget, while standing there, that the first link which unconsciously bound the Apostle to Europe, was the person of an Italian; that, at their first meeting, the Roman knelt to Peter, and was rebuked in the memorable words, "Stand up, for I also am a man!"

One has also an excellent view of the harbour of Jaffa from this same spot. The coast of Syria has really no harbours—such as we mean by the name. It is a line of sand, against which the inland ocean of the Mediterranean thunders with the full force and volume of its waves. The existence of a few rocky ledges like a coral reef running parallel to the shore, forming a breakwater to the small lagoon inside, has alone made harbours possible—and, with harbours, commerce and direct communication with the outer world. Yet, had these been more commodious and common than they are, the separateness of the land from the rest of the world (for which it was selected in order to educate Israel) would have been sacrificed. As it is, the balance is nicely adjusted between exclusion from the outer world and union with it.

To this small reef of rocks Jaffa, the only seaport of the land of Israel, owes its existence as well as its continuance from the earliest period of history until the present day. Within that pond, sheltered from the foaming breakers outside, many a vessel lay in peace

before even the days of Joshua (ch. xix. 46). Belonging as it did to the tribe of Dan, there "Dan remained in ships" (Judges v. 17).

Through that opening, but ten feet wide, to the west, vessels have sailed, and plunged into the deep sea—Jonahs among them—for thousands of years. Through the other opening, of much the same size, to the north, have come the floats of cedar trees from Lebanon for rebuilding the house of the Lord. The old town has seen many adventures, and the cry of battle from the wars of the Maccabees, the Romans, the Saracens, the Crusaders, has risen around its walls, and within its houses. Yet its history is not so eventful as that of most of the old Eastern towns which survive the wrecks of time.

But we must leave the house-top, and keep our appointment at the hotel to prepare for our journey, which is to begin in real earnest on the morrow.

FROM JAFFA TO JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER VI.

ACROSS THE PLAIN OF SHARON.

I HAVE already informed the reader of the important fact, that we had hired at Cairo a certain Hadji Ali as our dragoman. Hadji was an honourable addition made to the name, and it represented the fact that he had made a pilgrimage to Mecca. We had hired him as the consecrated, saintly Hadji. Now it must be confessed that the Hadji did not look like a saint such as our Western minds conceive one to be. If he was one, he had the gift of concealing the saint and revealing the sinner. But, to do him justice, this revelation was more in an unpleasant sinister twist of his under jaw, in the bandit look of his gaiters, and in the wide-awake, yet reserved and cunning, expression of his eyes, than in any word he ever uttered, or in any act he ever committed during our journey.

Hadji had made arrangements for the road, and wished us to see our horses, and be satisfied with his selection—a most difficult and important piece of business! We met at the door of the hotel—one of those peculiar Eastern hostelries of which I shall afterwards speak—to make our acquaintance with our future friends, the horses. They seemed a vulgar pack, without breeding or anything to commend them. But after sundry experiments, protests, rejections, and trials of the girths and saddles, we at last selected our cattle, and arranged to start next morning. I had brought an English saddle with me, and it was ordered to be put on a quiet, patient, respectable-looking cob—afterwards called, in spite, "the cow."

I availed myself of the opportunity afforded to me of here visiting a real native dwelling. It was what in Scotland would be called a humble "clay biggin'." The fire was on the floor. The furniture consisted of two large—what shall I call them?—jars, three or four feet high, for holding grain, with an orifice at the bottom for extracting it. There was also a quern, exactly the same as those used in the Highlands, and with which, when a youth, I have often ground corn for my amusement. A bottle full of oil hung up in the smoke, in order, I presume, to keep it always in a fit state for the lamp—reminding one of the saying of David in his sorrow, "I am become like a bottle in the smoke." The beds, consisting only of carpets and rugs, were rolled up in a corner.

Next morning our cavacade mustered, and we saw, for the first time, the *matériel* of a tour in Palestine. As to the men who accompanied us, there was our chief, Hadji Ali, with brown braided jacket, loose Turkish trousers, and long black gaiters or leggings. A bright *kaffia* was wrapped round his head and protected his neck and shoulders. Hadji had a horse, of course, assigned to him, but was always willing to exchange it for the animal which became unpopular with any of the party.

Next to him in dignity and responsibility was "Nubi," or the Nubian. He was our waiter, personal servant, steward, or whatever will best describe Hadji's mate. He was a tall young man, with skin dark as ebony, shining teeth, intelligent countenance, of most obliging disposition, from whom we never heard a murmur.

The third class was represented by Mohammed, the cook, excellent as an artist, and most civil as a man, whose sole defect was liability to occasional pains, intimately connected with his digestion, to alleviate which I ministered from my medicine-chest, thereby securing to myself from that time the honourable title of Hakeem Pasha, or chief physician.

Then came Meeki, the master of the horse, and also of the mules. Meeki always rode a small ass—a creature which, unless he had known himself to be tough and enduring, would have been an ass indeed to have permitted Meeki to mount him. He was a square, thickset man, with short legs, broad back, and ponderous turbaned head. He rode astride or cross-legged, as it suited

him. The human side of his character came out wholly as a smoker of his constant friend the nargile, and as a singer or rather an earnest student of songs, which consisted of little short squeaks full of shakes, and in a minor key. His inhuman side came out in the dogged, fierce, imperious way in which he loaded and drove the pack-horses and mules. I verily believe Meeki had no

THE MASTER OF THE HORSE (an original sketch).

more heart in him than Balaam, and as little conscience. He was a constant study to us, whether when packing or unpacking at morn or even, or when trudging along at the head of the party on his wonderful little animal, which he so completely covered, that one could see only two small black hind legs pattering along with inde-

fatigable energy over sand and rock from morning till night.

Meeki had three muleteers under him, fine active Arab lads, who trembled at his voice. We had thus seven attendants, including Hadji, with about ten pack-horses and mules. All were needed: for, there are no roads in Palestine, and therefore no wheeled vehicles from Dan to Beersheba, not even a wheelbarrow. There are no hotels, except at Jaffa and Jerusalem; everything, therefore, required for the journey must be carried.

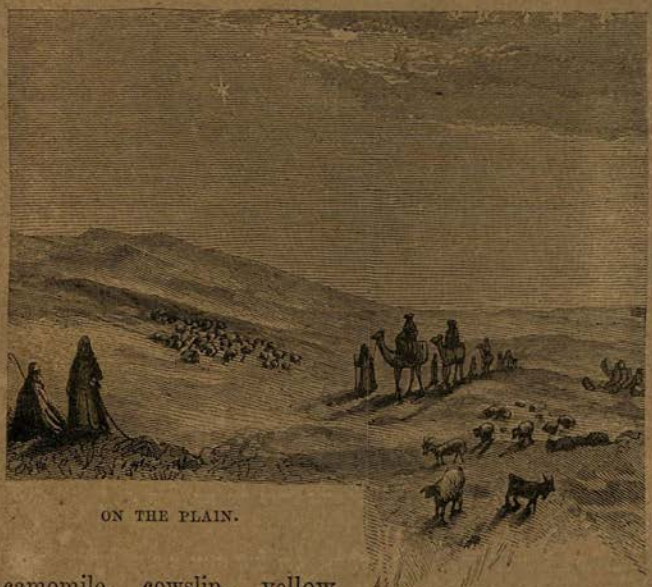
We left Jaffa after breakfast. The day was beautiful, and the atmosphere exhilarating: so we moved off, across the Plain of Sharon, full of hope for the future and in great enjoyment of the present. We drew up at a grove that formed the outskirts of the gardens, and were made welcome to take as many oranges as we could pocket from the yellow heaps which were rapidly increasing every minute by the gatherers emptying their basket-loads of the ripe and delicious fruit.

To appreciate an orange it must be eaten when taken from the tree and while retaining the full aroma treasured from sun and air. It may have been fancy, but it seemed to me that I had never, except here or at Malta, eaten a perfect orange.

We passed in our ride this forenoon a small hill, or rather mound, called Beth Dagon, where no doubt that fish god had once his foolish worshippers. Then we saw a handsome fountain called, I know not why, after Abraham; and we afterwards saw, what were older than

Abraham, and what retained all the glory and beauty of their youth—the flowers of the plain.

These were always a charm to the eye—a glory of the earth far surpassing that of Solomon. The plains and hills of Palestine are gemmed in spring with flowers. The red poppy, asphodel, pheasant's-eye, pink cranebill, mignonette, tulip, thyme, marsh marigold, white iris,



ON THE PLAIN.

camomile, cowslip, yellow broom, &c., are common to the Plain of Sharon, giving a life and light to the landscape which photography cannot yet copy.

We saw also, when near Ludd, the well-known high

tower of the mosque at Ramleh, three miles off to our right. It is situated on the highest ridge of the plain, and from its position and height (120 feet) it is said to command a noble view of the Plain of Sharon to the north, and of the Plain of Philistia to the south.

We lunched at Ludd, the ancient Lydda, where the Apostle Peter cured Eneas of the palsy. We pushed on for the ruins of the church named after England's patron saint, St. George, who was, according to tradition, born and buried here. The church, it is said, was rebuilt by Richard Cœur de Lion. We spread our first table in Palestine under the remains of one of its noble marble arches. Here an old, bearded Greek Christian visited us, and told us many stories about St. George, with keen, believing eyes, bated breath, and uplifted finger. I wish I could recollect them, and had not too hastily assumed that I never would forget such delightful sensation legends regarding the saint; how he was slain, burnt, and beheaded by the King of Damascus, and always came alive again; with the subsequent adventures of his head, which was said to be buried under the high altar. But these legends have passed away from my memory.

After luncheon we pushed on for our camping-ground at Jimsu. The village is situated on a spur of the hills of Judea.

The first encampment is always a source of interest and excitement to the traveller. We formed no exception to this general experience. Those who associate

discomfort with a tent have never lived in one, or it must have been bad, or overcrowded, or, worse than all, in a wet or cold climate. We had two tents; the one accommodating three persons, the other two.

On entering the head-quarters and mess-tent, we found the floor spread with rugs; a table round the pole in the centre, arranged for dinner, covered with a beautiful white cloth, and on it two wax candles burning, with ample space round for our camp-stools. Three iron bedsteads were ranged along the sides, and our bags and portmanteaus placed beside them, and everything wearing an air of thorough comfort, even luxury. The other tents, belonging to our suite, were pitched near us: one for the kitchen, and the cook's utensils and personal luggage; and the other for the general dormitory of the servants, in which Hadji nightly led off the snores.

To pitch those tents so as to have them all in order in the evening to receive "the party," it is necessary that the muleteers should start early with them and all the baggage, and push on direct to the ground fixed upon, leaving the travellers and dragoman to follow at their leisure.

An excellent dinner was in due time served up by Hadji, and assiduously attended by Nubi. We had not much variety during our tour, but every day there was more than enough to satisfy the cravings of any healthy, even fastidious appetite. Soup, roast mutton, fowls, curry, excellent vegetables, a pudding, a good dessert, and *café noir*, of first rate quality afterwards, cannot be called "rough-

ing it in the desert." This sort of dinner we had every day. And for breakfast, good tea and coffee, eggs by the dozen, always fresh and good too, with sundry dishes cunningly made up of the *débris* of the previous dinner. We had also an abundant luncheon, which the Hadji carried with him on a pack-horse, and was ready at any time, or in any place, to serve up with the greatest nicety.

PORTRAIT OF A SHEIK.

When we reached our tents we found a large number of peasant Arabs, from the neighbouring village, assembled. They were very quiet and civil, and did not trouble us *much* about *backsheesh*, although our experience regarding this Eastern impost was daily, almost hourly, enlarging. Every petty Sheik, whether of tribe or village, thinks himself entitled to it; the children clamour for it; their parents support the claim; and in some

wady, men with clubs or guns may urge it upon the wayfarer to a degree beyond politeness.

But admitting once for all this notorious Oriental weakness, I must also protest against the injustice done to the oppressed descendants of Ishmael, by looking upon them as the only race guilty of levying such an income-tax or "black mail." What is the British "tip," "fee," "Christmas Box," "trifle," &c.?

The Arabs of the village of Jimsû asked *backsheesh*, and we distributed about sixpence among the tribe. They were satisfied.

But I had provided a talisman wherewith to "soothe the savage breast." I selected it for *à priori* reasons, founded on human nature, before leaving London. Instead of taking powder and shot, I took—could the reader ever guess what?—*a musical snuff-box*, to conquer the Arabs; and the experiment succeeded far beyond my most sanguine expectations.

Whenever we pitched our tent near a village, as on this occasion, and produced the box as a social reformer, we had soon a considerable number of people, old and young (the females keeping at a respectful distance), crowding round us, inquisitively but not disagreeably. When the box was wound up, and the tinkling sounds were heard, they gazed on it with an expression more of awe and fear than of wonder.

It was difficult to get any one to venture near it, far less to allow it to touch his head. But once this was accomplished, it was truly delightful to see the revolution

which those beautiful notes, as they sounded clear and loud through the Arab skull, produced upon the features of the listener. The anxious brow was smoothed, the black eye lighted up, the lips were parted in a broad smile which revealed the ivory teeth, and the whole man seemed

GATE OF SYRIAN VILLAGE.

to become humanized as he murmured with delight, "tayēeb, tayēeb" (good, good).

When once the fears of one were dispelled, the others took courage, until there was a general scramble and competition, from the village patriarch down to his grand-

children, to hear the wonderful little box which could bring such marvellous music through the brain.

I did not find my first night in a tent either ideal or agreeable. The ear was as yet unaccustomed to the heterogeneous noise which found an easy entrance through the canvas. All night the horses and mules seemed to be settling old quarrels, or to be in violent dispute about some matters of personal or local interest; a scream, a kick, a stumble over the tent ropes—shaking our frail habitation and making us start—appeared to mark a climax in the argument. The Arabs kept up an incessant jabber all night—as it seemed to me. The voices, too, of Meeki and Hadji were constantly heard amidst the Babel. Every village, moreover, has its dogs without number: and these barked, howled, and flew about as if smitten with hydrophobia, or in full cry of a midnight chase.

One imagined, too—or, worse than all, believed—that some of those wolfish and unclean animals were snuffling under the canvas close to the bed, or thumping against it, as if trying to get an entrance. And if this living creature rubbing against your thin wall was not a dog, might it not be an Arab?—and if an Arab might he not have a gun or dagger?—and then! But all these experiences belonged to our novitiate. Very soon, between increased fatigue by day, and increased sleep by night, all such thoughts and fears vanished, until dogs might bark, horses kick, Arabs talk, and camels groan, without disturbing us more than the waves disturb Ailsa Craig or Gibraltar.

FROM JAFFA TO JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE HEIGHTS OF NEBY SAMWIL.

BEFORE bringing the reader to Neby Samwil, and picturing to him as best we can, what we saw from it, we must begin, like most gossips, at the beginning, which in this case is our early start from the tent, when there is a scene common to all mornings in a Palestine tour.

The tents and baggage precede the travellers, in order that everything may be ready on their arrival at the end of the day's journey, which implies the tents pitched, the luggage arranged, the candles lighted, and the dinner ready. "Where shall we encamp?" is not always easy of solution; for various matters must be taken into account—such as the distance to be travelled, the proba-

bility of pitching among civil neighbours, or of finding a Sheik who may be known to the dragoman; the supply of water, good shelter, and the chance of procuring provisions.

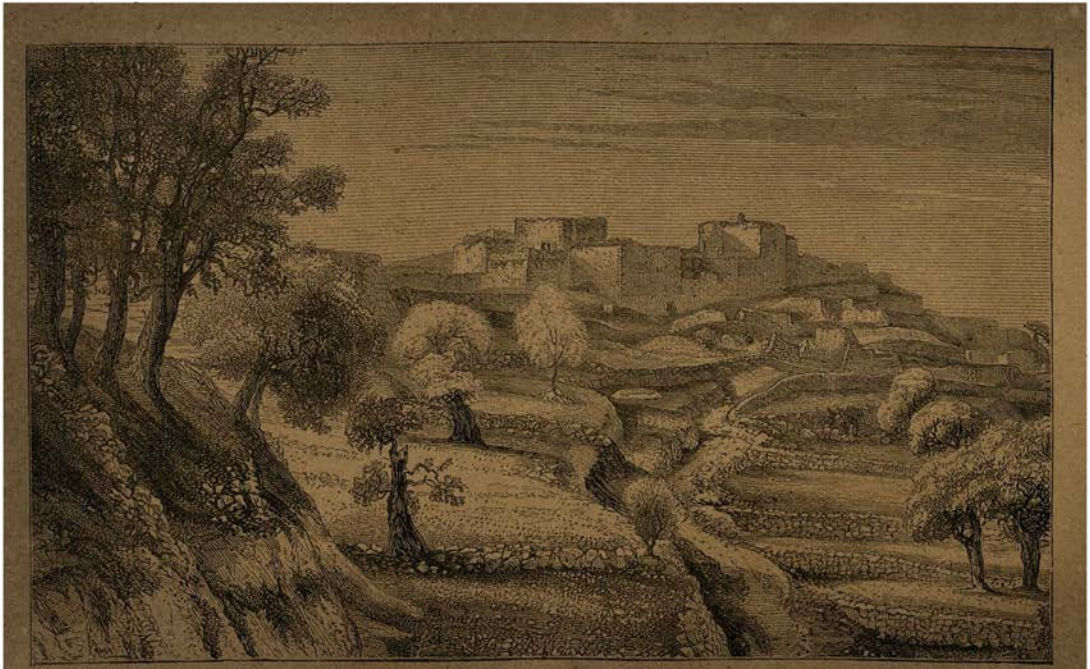
The camping-ground being settled, preparations are made for the start. It is obviously most conducive to comfort to "break the back of the day" in the cool of the morning and before noon. It is therefore in vain that a lazy or sleepy man wishes to enjoy "a little more sleep and a little more slumber;" in vain may he, in the weakness of the flesh and for the credit of his conscience, assert, half asleep, half awake, that he had a restless night, for his companions testify to a continued snore from him like the burst of waves on a stony beach. Of course their testimony he indignantly rejects as incompetent. But in the mean time the pins of the tent are being pulled up. The ropes slacken, the tent-pole quivers, and to your horror you discover that your canvas dwelling is being taken down, and that in a few minutes, unless you start up and get dressed, you will be exposed in bed in open daylight, to the gaze of a crowd of grinning Arabs with piercing eyes and white teeth, who are watching for you as the tag-rag of a town for the removal of the canvas which conceals the wild beasts at a show. Move you must, therefore move you do.

Very soon thereafter the beds are rolled up, the baggage packed, and everything stowed away on horse or mule's back, except the breakfast-table and camp stools around it, where the moveable feast is served up. But

that packing! It was always a study to us, and never failed to excite remark and laughter.

On such an occasion Meeki, the master of the horse, came out in the full strength of his power and passion. He reigned triumphant. His spirit seemed to inspire all the muleteers and the Arabs who assisted him, so that a common hysterical vehemence seized the whole group. They shouted, screeched, yelled, without a moment's pause. All seemed to be in a towering passion at every person and everything, and to be hoarse with rage and guttural vociferation. Every parcel was strapped with a force and rapidity as if life depended upon it. The heavy packages were lifted with starting eyeballs and foaming lips on to the backs of the mules. One heard ever and anon a despairing cry as if from a throat clutched by a garrotter, "Had—ji A—li!" which after a while drew forth the chief with a calm and placid smile to decide the question in dispute.

At last the long line of our baggage animals moved, with trunks of crockery, rolls of bedding, and piles of portmanteaus and bags. Off the loaded animals went at a trot, with the bells tinkling round their necks, the muleteers following on foot, and driving them along the rough path at a far more rapid pace than we could follow. Meeki then took off his turban, dried his head, lighted his nargile, sat sideways on his dot of an ass, and brought up the rear of our calvacade with a calmness and peace which had no traces of even the heavy swell that generally follows a hurricane by sea or land.



GIBEON.

One or two other characteristics of every spring morning in Palestine may be here mentioned. Nothing can exceed the buoyant, exhilarating atmosphere. The dews of night, which are so heavy that any garments left out become saturated with moisture as if soaked in a tub of water, seem to invigorate the air as well as the vegetation. There is consequently a youth, life, and fragrance in these mornings. As the day advances, and the sun begins to pour down his heat, and the body becomes weak, the tents somehow appear to be too far off.

The cavalcade generally rides along in single file. There is seldom a path, or a bit of meadow, which permits of two jogging on together. But there is, after all, no great disadvantage in this limitation of riding space or of social conference, as there is no country in which silent thought and observation during a journey are more congenial than in Palestine.

The deliberate choosing of a Scripture scene for a place for luncheon, at first sounded as if it were an irreverence. Hadji rides up and inquires—"Where shall we *lonch*, Hakeem Pasha?" adding with a humble smile: "Where *you* please! All same to me." Where shall it be? At Bethlehem? Bethel? Shiloh? Nain? is discussed by the party. At first thought, it seems out of place to propose such a carnal thing as lunching on hard eggs and cold lamb at such places. Yet at these places one luncheons or dines, as the Patriarchs did before.

The path by which we ascended the Judæan hills from the plain to the ridge at Gibeon is one of the worst tra-

versed by us in Palestine. With few exceptions, indeed, the so-called roads are either covered with loose stones, or are worn down, by the travelling over them since the days of the Canaanites, into narrow trenches cut deep into the living rock; or they go across slippery limestone ledges; or over a series of big stones with deep holes between; or are the channels of streams, which have the one advantage of being supplied with water to cool the hoofs of the floundering quadrupeds.

But the horses are remarkably sure-footed, and the only danger arises from their riders checking them with the bridle, rather than letting them take their own way, and step with judicious thoughtfulness, as it often seemed to us, from stone to stone, picking their way with marvellous sagacity. Their pace is very slow. Not but that a rider with a "noble Arab steed" can manage to dash along and make "the stony pebbles fly" behind him; but this requires a good horse familiar with the ground, and a good rider as thoroughly acquainted with his horse.

We paced slowly upwards over polished limestone or marble rocks, in some places actually up artificial steps. One hour from Jimsû brought us to the lower Beth-horon, now called Beitur El Talita; another hour to the upper Beth-horon, or Beitur El Foca. In two hours more we reached the upland plateau, and after crossing the ridge saw Gibeon (El Jib) before us. Passing it on its eastern side, near which our tents were pitched, we ascended Neby Samwil.

There is not, I venture to affirm, in all Palestine, nor

if historical associations be taken into account, in the whole world, such a view as that seen from Neby Samwil. This is not because of its height (2,650 feet)—though it is the highest point in Palestine, Hebron excepted—but from its position in relation to surrounding objects. This makes it a sort of centre, commanding such views of the most illustrious spots on earth as no other place affords.

What was any scene on earth in comparison with the one which we were about to gaze on! We were approaching a moment in life which was to divide for ever what had been longed for from what was to be realised, and to become henceforth only a memory. We have all experienced at such times the choking of the heart, the suppressed emotion as the dream of years is about to become a reality. In a few moments, when that height is gained, we shall have seen Jerusalem!

The summit was reached in solemn silence. There was no need of a guide to tell us what to look at first. Every face was turned towards Jerusalem. The eye and heart caught it at once, as they would a parent's bier in the empty chamber of death. The round hill dotted with trees, the dome beneath, the few minarets near it,—there were Olivet and Jerusalem! No words were spoken, no exclamations heard; nor are any explanations needed to enable the reader to understand our feelings when seeing, for the first time, the city of the Great King.

After a time we began with suppressed eagerness to

search out other objects in the landscape, and the curiosity became intense to identify its several features; and then we heard words breathed quietly into our ears, as an arm was stretched out directing us to several famous spots whose names were holy, and which summoned up the most illustrious persons and events in the memory of the Christian. But I must patiently consider the panorama more in detail, that we may learn something from it, for we cannot stand on any spot in Palestine from which we can see or learn more.

After Jerusalem, the first object that arrested me was the range of the hills of Moab. These mountains reared themselves like a straight unbroken wall, not one peak or point breaking the even line along the eastern sky from north to south. They were not higher above the level of the sea than the place on which we stood; yet they seemed to form a gigantic barrier between us and the almost unknown country beyond. We saw the range in the most advantageous circumstances. It was towards evening. The setting sun fell upon it, and upon the wild eastern shores of the Dead Sea at its base, the sea itself being hidden in its deep hollow grave. The light was reflected from every scaur and precipice, with such a flush of purple, mingled with delicate hues of amethyst and ruby. The atmosphere, too, was so transparent, that we distinctly saw beyond the Dead Sea.

The next thing that impressed me, standing here, was the smallness of "the land." We saw across it. On one side was the great sea, on which sails were visible; on

the other, the range of Moab, which is beyond the eastern boundary of Palestine. To the south we saw within a few miles of Hebron; while to the north we discovered the steep promontory of Carmel plunging its beak into the sea. It is difficult to conceive that the Palestine of the Patriarchs—that is, the country from the inhabited "south" to the great plain of Esdraelon, which, like a green strait, sweeps past Carmel to the steeps above the Jordan, and separates the old historical land of Canaan from Galilee—does not extend farther than the distance between Glasgow and Perth, and could be traversed by an express train in two or three hours. But so it is. The whole land, even from Dan to Beersheba, is not larger than Wales. We saw not only the entire breadth but almost the entire length of the Palestine of the Patriarchs from the height of Neby Samwil.

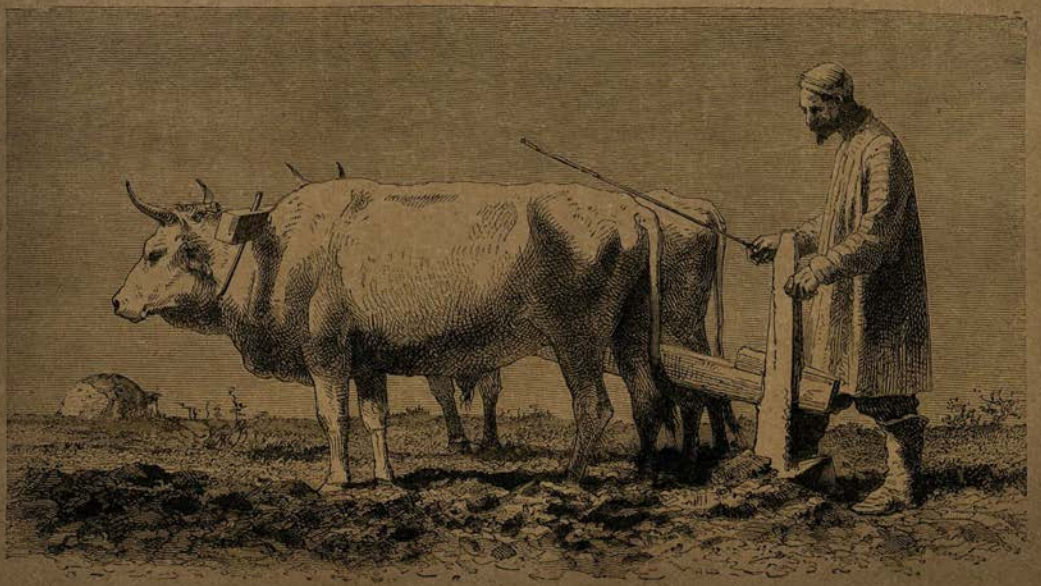
And how did the land look? Was it picturesque? Had it that romantic beauty of hill and dale, that look of a second Paradise, which one has sometimes heard in descriptions of it from the pulpit? Well, it did not give me this impression. But what then?

What if it is not to be compared with a thousand spots in our own island—which by the way includes within its rocky shores more scenes of varied beauty than any other portion of the earth;—what if Westmoreland and Wales, not to speak of the Scotch Highlands, contain landscapes far more lovely than are to be found in Palestine?

Still Palestine stands alone ;—alone in its boundaries of seas and sandy deserts and snow-clad mountains; and alone in the variety of its soil, climate, and productions. I do not claim for it either beauty or grandeur—which may be found in almost every region of the globe—but I claim for it peculiarities and contrasts to which no other region can afford a parallel. Grant its present poor condition, its streams dried up, its tillage neglected, its statuesque scenery unsubdued by the mellowed and softening influences of a moist atmosphere, its roads rough, its hills bare, and its limestone rocks unprotected by soil, its villages wretched hovels, its towns extinct, its peasantry slaves or robbers. What then ?

Is there no poetry in this desolation which, if it does not represent the past, is yet the picture which flashed before the spiritual eye of the mourning prophets ? Is there no poetry, either, in the harmony between the rocky sternness of the land and the men of moral thews and sinews which it produced; or in the contrast between its nothingness as a land of physical greatness and glory, and the greatness and glory of the persons and events which were cradled in its little Wadies and on its small rocky eminences ?

Is there no poetry, nothing affecting to the imagination, in the physical structure of a country which is without a parallel on earth ? For within a space so small that the eye can take it in from more than one point, there are heights, like Hermon, covered with eternal snow, and depths, like the Jordan valley, with a heat exceeding that



ORIENTAL PLOUGHING.

of the tropics; there is on one side the sea, and on the other a lake whose surface is 1300 feet lower down, with soundings as deep again.

Where is there such a river as the Jordan, whose turbulent waters never gladdened a human habitation, nor ever irrigated a green field,—which pursues its continuous course for 200 miles within a space easily visible, and ends at last in the sea of death never to reappear? Where on earth is there such a variety of vegetation, from the palm on the sultry plain to the lichen beside the glacier?—where such howling wildernesses, such dreary and utterly desolate wastes, with such luxuriant plains, fertile valleys, pasture lands, vineyards, and corn-fields? —where such a climate varying through every degree of temperature and of moisture?

Of a truth the beautiful is not necessarily associated with what stirs the human mind to wonder and admiration. Who thinks of the beautiful when visiting a churchyard, where the great and good lie interred; or a battle-field, where courage and self-sacrifice have won the liberties of the world; or a spot like the bare rough rock of the Areopagus, on which stood the lowly, unknown, despised Jew revealing truths to Athens such as Plato the spiritual and Socrates the God-fearing had never discovered? Or who thinks of the beautiful in thinking about Paul himself, "whose bodily presence was weak," although he was the greatest man, as a teacher, that ever lived?

Not for one moment then did I feel disappointed with

Palestine. It was the greatest poem I ever read, full of tragic grandeur and sweetest hymns. I did not look for beauty, and therefore was not surprised at its absence; but I did look for the battle-scenes—for the Marathon and Thermopylæ—of the world's civilisation, and for the earthly stage on which real men of flesh and blood, but full of the spirit of the living God, played out their grand parts, and sung their immortal songs, which have revolutionised the world, and I found it no other than I looked for, to my ceaseless joy and thanksgiving.

But let us once more attend to the details of the landscape.

Look with me towards the west. Our faces are towards the "great sea," which stretches as an immense blue plain, ending in the horizon, or rather in a drapery of luminous cloud no one can exactly say where. The shore you see is a straight line running north and south; and we can distinguish at this distance off, say twenty miles, the long sandy downs that separate the blue sea from the green sea of plain. Look southward along the shore—we see the place of Askelon, the site of Ashdod; Tell, Ramleh, Ekron. We are already acquainted with Ramleh and Lydda, so distinctly seen beneath us on the plain. Beyond them is Jaffa, our old friend, like a grey turban on its hill. Now, carrying the eye along the sea from Jaffa northward, you perceive a headland—that is Carmel!

Now let us turn in the opposite direction, from the sea to the west, with the range of Moab along the sky-line opposite to us, and the table-land of Judæa, a few miles

broad, at our feet. Looking southward, we see the undulating hills around Bethlehem, Jebel Fureidis, where Herod lies buried; nearer, but in the same direction, and about six miles off, are Jerusalem and Olivet; right under us, the eye slowly passing northward, we see the conical hill of Gibeah of Saul; onwards to the north, on our left

JERUSALEM FROM THE DISTANT APPROACH.

is the country round Bethel, with El-ram, Geba, and Micmash: while further beyond, the mountains of Ephraim. Beside us is Gibeon, and the scene of the great battle of Beth-horon.

Again, as we look down on the maritime plain, we see Azotus (Ashdod), where Philip was found, and follow his track along the sea-shore as he passed northward to

Cæsarea. In Ashdod and Ekron, both visible, abode the ark of God for seven months. We see Lydda, where Peter healed Eneas; Joppa, from which they sent for him when Dorcas died, and from which he afterwards journeyed to meet Cornelius, also at Cæsarea. Here we trace for the first time the footsteps of St. Paul, for down this path by the Beth-horons he probably descended twice from Jerusalem to Cæsarea—in both cases to save his life.

Standing here, we understand also the great battle which Joshua waged against the petty, yet, in their own place, and amongst their own numerous tribes, powerful chiefs of the heathen people of the land. For at our feet is the hill on which the village of El-Jib is now built, but which, as I have said, represents the old city of Gibeon, the capital of a numerous though not very valiant clan, and which commanded this great pass from the plain to the Jordan.

From this spot went those cunning diplomatists, the Gibeonites, to deceive Joshua, their want of truth all the while arising from a practical faith in Joshua as a great general and a veritable conqueror of the land. And out of those as yet to us unseen depths which plunge from the table-land of Judæa towards the Jordan, Joshua and his host made that wonderful march by night up 3,000 feet and for about twenty miles, until he reached Gibeon, his army in the morning rising like the sudden flood of a stormy sea, column after column pouring over the ridge into the upland plain round El-Jib, on which the heathen host were encamped, then dashing among them, and

DAMASCUS GATE, JERUSALEM.

sweeping them over the western ridge down the wild steeps that lead to the Philistian plain. The battle-field explained the battle. The rout must have been terrible!

I have visited many battle-fields, but except those where Suwarrow fought in the High Alps, or those in the Pyrenees where Wellington defeated Soult, I never saw any so wild as this. From the dip of the strata, rocks clothe the sides of the hills like the scales of a huge monster, overlapping each other, yet leaving deep interstices between. Steep gorges and narrow valleys cleave the hills as with deep gashes on every side of the road. After riding up the ascent to the plain of Gibeon, we understood how a demoralised army would in flight become utterly powerless, and, if panic-stricken, be hurled over each succeeding range of rocks.

Down beneath us was a green bay running from Philistia into the bosom of the hills. It was Ajalon! The Arabs call it *Yalo*.

But it is time to withdraw our gaze from the distant landscape, and our thoughts from what it suggests, and come back once more to Neby Samwil. The spot itself calls up many memories of the past. Here, probably, was the famous "High Place" of Gibeon, where the tabernacle constructed by Moses, and which had been the moveable temple throughout the wilderness journey, was pitched after many wanderings, and stood until Solomon's Temple was built at Jerusalem. Here, too, public worship was conducted, by a staff of priests appointed by David, around the brazen altar of Moses.

It was also the scene of one of the most imposing pageants ever witnessed in Judæa, when Solomon, with all that show, splendour, and magnificence which are associated with his name, "went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place; a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar." Here, too, "in Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee?" and he asked wisdom, and got it.

I left the top of Neby Samwil with devoutest thanksgiving, feeling that, if I saw no more, but were obliged to return next day to Europe, my journey would have been well repaid.

As the sun set, we descended the steep and rugged hill to our tents. We fully enjoyed the comfort and repose which they afforded. Nubi was busy with the dinner; Meeki was enjoying his nargile; while, all around, were kneeling camels, belonging to some travelling Arabs, chewing their evening meal of chopped straw, in which the horses and mules of our cavalcade heartily joined them. "With one stride came the dark"—yet a dark illumined by those clear stars which we never grew weary of looking at in this glorious sky.

By-and-by the chatter of the Arabs from Gibeon grew less, and the crowd dispersed. Even Meeki seemed to be dozing. The camel-drivers wrapped themselves in their cloaks, and lay curled up on the ground, like brown snails, beside their meek-eyed beasts. The quadrupeds, too, after paying off a few private grievances with sundry

kicks and sharp cries, sank into silence: at least I supposed they did so, for I, with my companions, soon fell into deep sleep on ground where Hivite and Perizzite had slept before me, and which had thundered to their tread as they rushed along before the storm of Joshua's fierce attack.

Next morning, before noon, we descended to the table-land of Judah and entered upon a broad, rough, stony path —the great northern road from Jerusalem to Galilee. We knew now that we were, for the first time, on the highway along which priests and kings, prophets and apostles, the holy men of old, and the One above all, had passed to and fro. We slowly came nearer Jerusalem. We passed over a grey ridge, like a roll of a sea wave, and saw the Damascus Gate before us. We turned down to the left, towards the north-east corner of the wall, and got among Mohametan tombs, which for some reason or other were being visited by a number of women draped and veiled in white. We descended a hundred yards or so until we reached the road that passes from Anathoth to the city; travelled along it, with the Kedron valley to our left, and Olivet rising beyond—the city wall crowning the slope to our right—and then rode up to St. Stephen's Gate, entered it, took off our hats as we passed the portal, but spoke not a word, for we had entered Jerusalem!

THE HOLY CITY.

THE HOLY CITY.

CHAPTER VIII.

PAST AND PRESENT.

I REMEMBER a lady, whose mind was engrossed with the question of the return of the Jews to Palestine, being dreadfully shocked by a religious and highly respectable man, who presumed to express the opinion in her hearing, that the time was not far distant when there might be a railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and the cry be heard from an English voice of "Bethlehem Station!" The fair friend of Israel thereupon drew herself up indignantly and exclaimed, "Pray, sir, don't be profane!"

Again, a relative of mine who visited Jerusalem a few years ago, met there a sea-captain and his wife. The vessel, a collier from Newcastle, which the former commanded, or possibly the latter, from her manifest influence over her husband, had taken refuge at Jaffa, and

the captain had been induced by his lady to go up to Jerusalem to see the sights. My friend one day noticed a serious controversy going on, in low whispers, between the worthy pair, and thinking they had got into some perplexity from which he might be able to relieve them, he meekly offered his services. "Thank you, sir, most kindly," said the lady. "But I am really provoked with the captain; for he is, I am ashamed to say, sir, quite an unbeliever."

"Humbug, my dear!" interrupted the captain.

"No humbug at all, sir," replied his mate, addressing my friend, "but wery expensive unbelief too, I do assure you; for what is the use, I'd like to know, of one's paying a guide for showing you all them famous places if one does not, like the captain, believe what the guide says?"

"Easy, my dear," protested the honest sailor, laying his hand quietly on his wife's arm: "I knows and believes as well as you do the Scripturs, and knows that all them places are in the Bible; but don't let any of them guides come it over me so strong with their lies, and tell me that that hill is the Mount of Holives, and that other place the Holy Sepulchre, and Calvary, and all that sort of thing. I won't believe them Jews: I knows them far too well; you don't!" Whether the captain was ever able to square the actual Jerusalem with his ideal one, I know not.

Now these stories, literally true, only illustrate in a ludicrous form the fact, that many people have, like the

captain, a Jerusalem of their own—full of the beautiful, the sacred, the holy, and the good—but which is not like the real Jerusalem. Hence, when they visit Jerusalem, they are terribly disappointed; or when any traveller who has done so describes it as he would any other city, and admits that he has felt some of the lighter and more ordinary emotions of humanity in it, it looks to them almost like profanity, or what some people call, with equal wisdom, "irreverence."

But, after all, there needs no effort to "get up" feeling in Jerusalem. It has no doubt its commonplace, prosaic features, more so indeed than most cities of the Eastern world; but it has its glory, its waking-dreams, its power over the imagination and the whole spirit, such as no city on earth ever had, or can have. Therefore I shall tell what I saw and felt in Jerusalem, how sun and shade alternated there, how smile and tear came and went in it, just as I would when speaking of any other spot on this material earth.

Yet I entered Jerusalem with neither smile nor tear, but with something between the two; for I had no sooner doffed my tabousch in reverence as I passed through St. Stephen's Gate and experienced that queer feeling about the throat which makes one cough, and dims the eyes with old-fashioned tears, than my horse—very probably owing to my want of clear vision—began to slide and skate and stumble over the hard, round, polished stones which pave or spoil the road. I heard some of my companions saying, "Look at the Pool of

Bethesda! See the green grass of the Temple Area! We are going to enter the Via Dolorosa!" but how could I take in the full meaning of the words, when with each announcement a fore-leg or a hind-leg of my horse went off in a slide or drew back with a shudder, and when the horrors of broken bones became so present

ST. STEPHEN'S GATE.

as for a moment to exclude all other thoughts? "Such is life," as the saying is. And such were the prosaic circumstances of my entrance into Jerusalem. I tried, however, to make them more harmonious with my body and mind, by descending from my horse, handing him to Meeki, wiping my brow, and begging my informant to

repeat some of his information, while I sat on a portion of an old wall to listen.

Within a few yards of the gate of St. Stephen, by which we entered, there was a large square space, into which we looked. It is a large tank, about 365 feet long, 30 broad, and 50 deep, with high enclosing walls,

POOL OF BETHESDA.

and is called the Pool of Bethesda. The bottom is earth and rubbish; but the ledge is sufficient, along its northern slope, to afford room for a half-naked Arab to plough it with a scraggy ass. Its porches and everything like ornament are gone, and nothing remains save the rough walls of this great bath.

Turning the eyes to the left, you see, about fifty yards off along the city wall, southward, a narrow gateway opening into the bright green grass, looking fresh and cool. That is one of the entrances into the wide, open space where once stood the temple. But we dare not enter into it at present, for it is holy ground, and we must get a letter from the Pasha, and pay him a good *backsheesh* to secularize the spot sufficiently to admit us. We shall pay for the privilege, and visit it by-and-by. In the meantime let us walk to the hotel. Our path is along the so-called "Via Dolorosa." This is a narrow street, roughly paved, and hemmed in with ruined walls sadly wanting in mortar. In some parts there are arches overhead, and many delightful studies of old houses and ancient mason work, which, by the way, a young lady was sketching as we passed, seated on a camp stool, with a white umbrella over her head. How one's thoughts went home to the happy English fireside, with paterfamilias, and brothers and sisters, looking over her drawings!

One repeats to himself as he goes along this street, "The Via Dolorosa!"—words so full of meaning, but which the street does not help to interpret; unless from its being, as seen "in the light of common day," a tumble-down, poverty-stricken, back lane, without anything which the eye can catch in harmony with the past.

Was this the real, "Via Dolorosa"? But we must not begin with our scepticism as to places, or encourage those "obstinate questionings" which constantly suggest

VIA DOLOROSA.

themselves in Jerusalem. The silence of authentic history is made up for, no doubt, by supplying, out of an inexhaustible store of traditions, a guide to pilgrims, which enables them to see such holy places as the following:—"The window in the 'Arch of Ecce Homo,' from which Pilate addressed the people,"—"the place where Pilate declared his innocence,"—"where Jesus stood as He addressed him,"—"where Mary stood near Him as He spoke,"—the several places "where Jesus fell down under the weight of the cross,"—the spot "where Simon had the cross laid upon him," &c., &c. All Jerusalem is thus dotted with fictitious places, *in memoriam*, to excite the devotion of the faithful. To their eye "of faith" the Via Dolorosa is necessarily a very different street from what it can possibly be to us whose "faith in these traditions" is not so great.

After leaving the Via Dolorosa we passed through the bazaar, but it is poor, squalid, and unworthy of any particular notice, after those of Cairo, or even Alexandria. There was the usual narrow path between the little dens called shops, with the accustomed turbans presiding over the usual wares—shoes, seeds, pipes, clothes, tobacco, hardware, cutlery, &c., while crowds moved to and fro wearing every shade of coloured clothes, and composed of every kind of out-of-the-way people, Jews, Turks, Greeks, Bedowin, with horses, asses, camels, all in a state of excitement.

We then went to an hotel to call for a friend. How shall I describe these so-called hotels? I cannot indeed

now separate in memory one hotel from the other—and there are but three in Jerusalem. They are, however, wonderfully confused and picturesque, with their rooms, corners, passages, outside stories from floor to floor, giving endless peeps of open sky, with balconies and flat roofs, all huddled together like a number of hat-cases, or bandboxes, and approached, not as in other countries by an imposing door, over which hangs an enormous gilt sign of the Golden Bull, or Spread Eagle, or by an open court, beyond which drays, gigs, and carriages are seen, but by a steep, narrow trap stair, which ascends from a door in the street, but which is more a slit in the wall than a door, and might conduct from a condemned cell to the gallows.

This sort of architecture is very characteristic of a country where, at a moment's notice, or without it, the orthodox descendants of the Prophet might take it into their turbaned heads to gain heaven by attacking the hotel, under the influence of some fanatical furor. "There is no saying!" as the cautious and timid affirm when they expect some mysterious *doing*. And thus the steep stair rising from the narrow door would serve as a mountain pass for the defenders of the hotel; while the more extended battle-field of the open spaces above, overlooked by upper stories like overhanging precipices, would become strategic points of immense importance.

The "travellers' room" in this hotel is not unlike what one finds in small country inns in Britain. The back windows are in a wall which forms one of the sides of

JERUSALEM FROM THE POOL OF HEZEKIAH.

the "Pool of Hezekiah!"—so-called. There the old reservoir lay, immediately beneath us, with its other sides formed by walls of houses, their small windows looking into it just as the one which I gazed through did. It was an odd association, when one withdrew his head and surveyed the room, to see placards on the wall advertising "Bass" and "Allsopp." No wonder the captain was sceptical as to his being in the Holy City of his early associations!

My first desire on entering the hotel was to ascend to the uppermost roof to obtain a glimpse of the city. I was enabled to gratify my wishes, and to see over a confusion of flat and domed buildings, pleasantly relieved here and there by green grass and trees. The elegant "Dome of the Rock" rose over them all, while above and beyond it was the grey and green Mount of Olives, dotted with trees. To take in this view at first was impossible. One repeated to himself, as if to drive the fact into his brain, or as if addressing a person asleep or half idiotic, "That is the Mount of Olives! that is the Mount of Olives!"

Before going to our own "khan," we went to the post-office, for letters from home. It was an odd sort of cabin, and was reached by a flight of outside stairs rising from the street leading to the Jaffa Gate.

Letters read, and good news received by all, we went to our hotel, which from a small board a foot or so long, nailed over the narrow door, we discovered to be "The Damascus." Hadji Ali had procured for us three rooms

on the first landing, which opened on a paved court whose roof was the glorious sky. The rooms were vaulted, clean, and comfortable, and not intolerably muggy. The beds had mosquito curtains, and the floors were flagged. The supply of water from a pump near our doors was unlimited.

Our retainers had a space allotted to themselves, where they squatted like gipsies, cooked for us in the open air, and lived very much as they would have done in the desert. Meeki and his muleteers were the only absentees, and where they lived I know not. Very probably it was in the stables with their horses and asses, whose sleep they would no doubt disturb. Hadji and his coadjutors, Nubi the waiter, and Mohammed the cook, took the sole charge of us while in this domicile; so that I do not know whether there were any persons in the hotel in the capacity of host or waiters.

There were among its inhabitants an English party. They were housed in places reached by outside stairs, somewhere among the highest roofs of the many-roofed building. On the evening of our arrival, I climbed over their apartments, ascending to the highest point by a ladder, and from thence I again saw Olivet, just as the last rays of the sun were colouring it with a golden hue, and making the Dome of the Rock sparkle with touches of brilliant light. And from the same spot I saw it immediately before sunrise next morning, when the silence of the city, and the freshness of the air, and the shadows cast from the hill, gave it a quite different, but equally

fascinating aspect. And thus slowly, but very surely, I began to *feel* that this was indeed the real Mount of Olives!

Never did I retire to rest with deeper thanksgiving than on my first night in Jerusalem. Ever and anon as the mind woke up, while the body gradually sank into repose, the thought, "I am in Jerusalem!" more and more inspired me with a grateful sense of God's goodness and mercy in having enabled me to enter it.

Before saying anything of next day's visits, I must declare that I abjure all discussions, with a few exceptions afterwards to be noticed, as to the antiquities of Jerusalem. Finding my time short, and impressed with the impossibility of forming a sounder opinion on controverted questions in Jerusalem than in my own room at home, I vowed to separate myself from any of the party who mentioned "the tower Hippicus"—one of the bones, a sort of hip-joint, of great importance and of great contention, in the re-construction of the old skeleton. I preferred to receive, if possible, some of the living impressions which the place was fitted to impart, to get, if possible, a good fresh whiff from the past—an aroma, if not from Jerusalem yet from nature, unchangeable in her general features, as revealed on the slopes and in the valleys of Olivet, or in the silent recesses round Bethany. I succeeded in doing so, at least to my own satisfaction, from the moment I cut the tower Hippicus.

But one thing is clear. Within the walls—if we except perhaps the Temple Area, that one grand spot of surpass-

ing interest in Jerusalem—there is not a street which either the Saviour or his Apostles ever trod. The present roadways, if they even follow the old lines, are above the rubbish which "many a fathom deep" covers the ancient causeway. There is not one house standing on which we can feel certain that our Lord ever gazed, unless it be the old tower at the Jaffa Gate (see p. 171). So let us, for the present, dismiss every attempt to associate *that* past with "the Jerusalem which now is." We may feel disappointed at this, yet I believe that it must be so. The heavens above and the hills around, not the streets beneath, are the same. It is modern Jerusalem, then, which in the meantime we must glance at; and the first place which naturally attracts us is the Church of the so-called "Holy Sepulchre."

THE HOLY CITY.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

ARRIVED at the church, we enter an inner court by a narrow doorway. Squatted on every side are rows of Easterns, who are selling, with well-defined profit-and-loss countenances, all the accompaniments of "religious" worship—beads, incense, crucifixes, pilgrim shells, staves, &c. &c.; while a ceaseless crowd from all lands is passing to and fro.

Now we must understand, first of all, that this church is a very large one, so that under the one roof are several chapels in which different "communions" worship. These do not of course call themselves "sects," for that would look as if the one true Apostolic Church could be divided. Each church only calls every other a sect. But while there is one true, Apostolic, Catholic Church, as distinct

from the sadly divided Protestant churches, yet a Protestant may be pardoned if he does not at once discover the fact when he enters the building. The Greek Church, "Catholic and Apostolic," representing, as it does, some eighty millions of the human race, has its chapel, adorned with barbaric splendour, in the centre, where it claims the sole privilege and honour of receiving once a year from Heaven, and of transmitting to the faithful—that is, to the Greeks—miraculous fire representing the Holy Spirit. The Latins, as they are called in the East, the Catholics, as they call themselves, or the Papists, as some presume to call them, also have a chapel and service, and loudly profess a very supreme contempt for the Greeks and their base superstitions. The Copts and Armenians, as members of the one undivided Church, have also their chapel, whose capacity bears a relative proportion to the numbers of their followers. There is only sufficient space for the worship of those who possess it. Sometimes, for want of room, a stand-up fight takes place, and at the famous Easter fight in the church, some thirty years ago, four hundred lives were lost!

Within this famous church, there are certain places and things shown, about whose authenticity all those witnesses for Catholic truth seem agreed. These are all connected with the last memorable scenes in the life and death of Him "who was the Truth." At the entrance of the church, for example, is a broad marble slab, where He was anointed for His burial. The Duke of Modena was kneeling and reverently kissing it as we went in. Close

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

on the left is the spot "where Mary stood while the body was anointing;" and then upstairs and downstairs, in nooks and corners, amidst the blaze of lamps and the perfume of incense, here, and there, and everywhere, are other noteworthy places, such as "where Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene as the gardener;" and "to his mother after the resurrection;" and "where his garments were parted;" and "where He was mocked;" "where He was bound;" where "His friends stood afar off during the crucifixion;" "the prison where He was detained while waiting for the crucifixion;" "the holes in which the three crosses were inserted;" the very "rent made in the rock by the earthquake;" and "the place where the three real crosses were found" three hundred years afterwards, the true cross being discovered, as it is *said*, by its working a miracle. These "sacred spots" are marked by altars, crosses, &c. There are also to be seen in this marvellous museum the actual tombs of Adam (Eve unknown) and of Melchizedek, and of John the Baptist, and of Joseph of Arimathea; finally, of our Lord. All these are palpable lies which we are asked to accept, and this too beside what they believe to be the tomb of Jesus and the place of His crucifixion!

The Holy Sepulchre is not what many people suppose it to be. It is not a cave, nor a hole in a rude rock; but a small marble chapel, which rises up from the flat stone floor. The *theory* of this sort of sepulchre is, that the mass of the rock out of which it was orginally hewn has been all cut away from around the mere slab on which our Lord's

body lay, leaving the slab or *loculus* only, and a thin portion of the original rock to which it adheres; just as we see a pillar of earth rise out of a flat in a railway cutting, marking where the original mass, of which it had formed a part, had been.

In its present state, therefore, nothing can be more unlike a sepulchre than this. Not one atom of the original rock—if it is there at all, which is doubtful—is visible, all being cased in marble. What a miserable desecration of the original cave (if it ever existed here)! What are we to think of the taste, or judgment, of those who dared to apply hammer or chisel to the holy spot? It might with almost equal propriety be transported now to be exhibited in Paris, London, or New York. There is not a trace existing of its original appearance.

This chapel of "the Holy Sepulchre" consists of two small apartments, neither of which could hold above half-a-dozen persons. The whole chapel is but twenty-six feet long and eighteen broad. The first small closet, which is entered between gigantic candlesticks, is called the Chapel of the Angel, as being the place where it is alleged the angel rolled away the stone, a fragment of which is pointed out.

Within this, entered by a narrow low door, is the sepulchre. It is seven feet long and nine broad. The roof is a small dome supported by marble pillars. The marble slab, which, it is said, covers the place where our Lord's body lay, occupies the space to the right of the door as you enter. Over it are placed a few most paltry

artificial flowers in pots, with some miserable engravings and votive offerings. Several small candles are always burning. The sale of these candles must yield a considerable revenue to the Church, for every pilgrim offers one, so that tens of thousands must each year be used and paid for. In addition to these candles, an immense number of gold and silver lamps—forty, I believe—are kept burning inside this small vault.

I went on two occasions into the "Holy Sepulchre." On the second, I remained in silence beside the attending priest for about a quarter of an hour, and was deeply interested in the pilgrims, who entered in a ceaseless stream to do homage to the sacred spot. They came in, knelt, kissed the stone, prayed for a second, presented their candle, and retired to make way for others. It was impossible not to be affected by so unparalleled a spectacle. These pilgrims had come from almost every part of Europe, at least. Greeks from the islands and shores of the Levant; Russians from the far-off steppes of Tartary, clothed in their sheep-skin dresses; French, Italians, Germans, and Portuguese, of every age and complexion; old men with white beards, tottering on their pilgrim-staves; friars and monks, with such a variety of costume and of remarkable physiognomy as could nowhere else be seen;—faces stranger than ever crossed the imagination—some men that might have sat to an artist as his *beau idéal* of cut-throat pirates, and others who might have represented patriarchs or prophets; some women who were types of Martha or Mary,

others of the Witch of Endor. The expression of most was that of stolid ignorance and superstition, as if they were performing a mysterious, sacred duty: but of others it was that of enthusiastic devotion.

I shall never forget one woman who kissed the stone again and again, pressing her lips to it, as if it were the dead face of her first-born. It was a touch of nature which made one's eyes fill, and was the most beautiful thing I saw in the church, except a fair child with lustrous eyes, who, indifferent to the grand spectacle of bishops and priests, was gazing at the light as it streamed through the coloured glass of one of the old windows.

It was strange to think of those people who had come such distances to this one spot. How many had been hoarding their little fractions for years to defray the expense of the long journey, how long they had planned it, how far they had travelled to accomplish it,—that old Russian, for example, with his big boots and hairy cap! What a thing this will be to them, when they go out of that door, and begin the journey homeward,—to tell all they saw, and to comfort themselves in life and death by the thought of their having made the pilgrimage and kissed the shrine!

And stranger far to think of how this stream of superstition, custom, divine love, or call it what we may, poured on through that door for centuries before America was discovered, or the Reformation dreamt of. All thoughts of the more distant past were lost to me in the

remembrance of the Crusades, and of old romantic ballads about the mailed men, the lords of many a ruined keep, from the banks of the Scottish Tweed to the castellated Rhine, whose silent effigies in stone, with hands clasped in prayer, have reposed for ages in gorgeous cathedrals, rural parish churches, and far-away chapels on distant islands. My mind was filled with stories that told of how they came to visit this spot, how they parted from their lady loves, and travelled over unknown lands, encountering strange adventures, and voyaging over unknown seas in strange vessels, with stranger crews; how they charged the Saracens in bloody battles, shouting their war-cries, and at last reached—one in a hundred perhaps—this spot so full to them of mystery and awe, here to kneel and pray as the great object and reward of all their sacrifices.

Historically I must confess that I had no faith whatever in this being the true sepulchre. Had I thought so it would only have filled me with pain and with a deeper longing to be able to lift those pilgrims up from the shadow to the substance, to remind them with the voice of a brother, "He is not here, but is risen," even while inviting them to "come and see the place where the Lord lay." Nor did I feel disposed to attach much moral blame to those who had long ago introduced this superstition. It is easy to realise the temptation, when teaching the ignorant masses and attempting to interest them in an unseen Christ and in spiritual worships, to supply them with a visible and sensuous religion of symbolism and relics

as a substitute for the reality, which it is assumed is too ethereal for ordinary men to sympathise with. We know how all such human plans utterly fail. But perhaps we know this more from observing their actual results in Roman Catholic countries than from any wisdom of our own. I do not therefore wonder so much at the original experiment, which was natural at least, as at the obstinate keeping up of it now that it has been found to sensualise instead of spiritualise the mind. But the presence of so much superstition filled me with unutterable pain. And perhaps the more so that it has been too long upheld to be now easily abolished, lest in shaking the faith of the masses in this foolish dream we might shake their faith in the glorious reality. My displeasure at the spectacle may be thought by some to indicate "irreverence," but true reverence results from a sense of God's presence, and is a consequent worshipping of Him in spirit and in truth, and the scenes at the Holy Sepulchre did not impress me with its existence there.

THE HOLY CITY.

CHAPTER X.

THE TEMPLE AREA.

IT is but as yesterday—immediately after the Crimean War—that this sacred enclosure could be entered by any except Moslems, or those who cared to pass themselves off as Moslems at the risk of their lives. All, without respect of persons, but not without respect of purse, can enter it now. There must no doubt be a few forms gone through, but these your dragoman manages; and they are not more serious than what travellers are familiar with in most European cities, when "orders" have to be obtained, and signed and countersigned by heads of Police or of Government, while the "guide" or "commissionnaire" magnifies the difficulty of getting them, the secret in every case, East and West, being the old golden key—*backsheesh*.

To see the Temple Area the *backsheesh* is pretty heavy, amounting, as far as I can recollect, though I am not certain, to about £1 for each traveller. But never was money paid with more good-will than that which admitted us to the most memorable spot on the face of the whole earth.

SOUTH WALL OF TEMPLE AREA.

The general shape of the Haram, or Temple Area, is nearly a parallelogram, its greatest length being 1,500 feet —rather more than a quarter of a mile—and its greatest breadth about 1,000. It is surrounded on all sides by

walls; some of them to the north and west serving also as walls of houses, which belong chiefly to civil or ecclesiastical officials. The east and south walls are also a part now of the city walls. Only a comparatively small

MOSQUE IN TEMPLE AREA.

portion of this great open space is occupied by buildings. About the centre is the Mosque el Sakrah (or "Dome of the Rock"), and at the south end the Mosque el Aksah.

The first thing that strikes one on entering this sacred spot is its profound repose. It is for the most part

covered with grass, which is green and beautiful, even at this early season of the year. Various kinds of trees, chiefly the dark, tall cypress, are scattered through it. Oriental figures float about with noiseless tread. No sound of busy traffic from the city breaks the silence. All is quiet as if in the heart of the desert. The spot seems consecrated to meditation and prayer.

SOUTH ENTRANCE HALL TO TEMPLE AREA.

Most probably the first questions which my readers will ask are these. What of the old Temple? Can its site be determined? Are there any traces of it? Now there is no question whatever as to the Temple having been built somewhere within this space called the "Haram."

There are also some very old remains which were, no doubt, connected with the Temple. There is a noble

gateway in the south wall—itself an old boundary of the Temple, and having cyclopean stones in it—which is described by Josephus. To see it one has to enter it from within the Haram, as the gateway is built up from

CHAMBERS FOR KEEPING THE CATTLE.

without. There is no monument of antiquity in Jerusalem so interesting as this. We have an entrance-hall about 50 feet long and 40 wide, and in the centre a column of a single block of limestone, 21 feet high and about 18 feet in circumferences. The sides of this hall

are built with huge stones. A flight of steps at the end leads to a long passage, sometimes horizontal, sometimes a gentle inclined plane, but extending 259 feet, and emerging by another flight of steps into the area above.

There are also remarkable arches at the south-east corner, forming underground structures with high and airy chambers, admirably adapted for keeping the cattle required for the Temple service.

There are also, inside of the area, underground cisterns filled from natural springs, which no doubt supplied the Temple with the water that was constantly required in its services. These cisterns are now got at by an opening like a well or chimney near the Mosque el Askah.

Such are some of the traces left of the ancient building, and as I walked across this green spot once occupied by God's Holy Temple, I cried—"Oh for a voice to utter the thoughts that arise in me!" For who can adequately express the thoughts which here rush upon the mind, wave upon wave in rapid and tumultuous succession, out of the vast and apparently limitless ocean of past history? Here, in this remote corner of the earth, and in a sequestered spot among the lonely hills, shepherd clans for centuries worshipped Him whom the great nations of the earth still worship as the "God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob."

This spot of verdure is the narrow strait through which, ages ago, the living stream passed which is now flooding the whole earth. If we ask *how* this enduring worship came to be established, our inquiry receives a reply from

the Books of Moses, in which its origin and establishment are recorded.

From the day in which the old "Tabernacle," or Tent of the Wilderness, was enlarged into the grand Temple of Solomon, what events transacted here rise up before the memory! There passes before the inner eye the august founding of Solomon's Temple, with its stately rites, cere-

UNDERGROUND CISTERNS.

monies, and solemn prayers;—its costly sacrifices, and the presence within it of the mysterious Shekinah. Again, we see the memorable day when the Temple of Zerubbabel was founded, when "the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the

noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."

We see the last and greatest temple of all—that of Herod—of which it was said, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts,"—all this passes before our minds, until the vision of the past is closed by the unparalleled horrors of the destruction of the last Temple by the Roman army, leaving no trace behind except the faded sculptures of some of its holy things on the crumbling Arch of Titus.

But standing here one loves to linger on earlier days and to recall the holy men and women, the kings, priests, and prophets, who came up to this spot to pray—whose faith is our own, whose sayings are our guide, whose life is our example, and whose songs are our hymns of worship. We seem to hear the majestic psalms of David which have ascended from this spot, and have never been silent since on earth, nor will be until they are absorbed in the worship of the Temple above.

But what more than absorbs all else into itself as a source of reverential wonder, was the presence here, in his own Holy Temple, of Jesus Christ, "the desire of all nations." How affecting to recall his teaching, within this spot, his holy and awful works here done, his words of love and power here spoken—the incidents of his boyhood, temptation, and ministry down to his last hours.

It may be that those holy feet have trodden the steps of that old passage; and His lips may have drunk from the waters that "made glad the city of God," and with reference to which He on the first day of the feast cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink, and the water which I shall give him shall be in him," as the water is within the Temple, "a living fountain springing up into everlasting life!"

But we must leave the site of the old Temple, with its solemn memories, and enter El Sakrah, or the "Mosque of Omar," which occupies nearly the centre of the great Haram enclosure. On entering it, one is immediately and irresistibly impressed by its exquisite proportions, its simplicity of design, and wonderful beauty. Nowhere have I seen stained-glass windows of such intense and glowing colours. Indeed one of the marked features of the interior is the variety and harmony of colour which pervade it, caused by the marbles of the pillars and wall. —the arabesque ornaments and Arabic inscriptions—the rich drapery hanging in the sunlight—with the flickering touches everywhere of purple and blue and golden yellow, from the Eastern sun pouring its splendour through the gorgeous windows; while every Oriental worshipper, as he bends in prayer or moves about in silence, displays some bright bit of dress embroidered with gold or silver in the looms of Damascus, or possibly of India, and thus adds to the brilliancy of the scene.

What chiefly attracts the eye and arrests the attention, however, within this temple of Mahommetan worship, is

an object which one never saw before in any such place, or beneath any roof, except the sky. Immediately under the dome, and within the circle of marble pillars which support it, with silk drapery overhanging it like a banner over the tomb of a hero, lies a huge rock! It is not the work of a cunning artist, shaped to a form of beauty, or

PLACE OF THE ROCK IN THE MOSQUE.

to serve any useful or religious purpose, but an unhewn mass, rough as a boulder on a mountain-side or on the sea-shore.

This stone is about sixty feet long and fifty broad, and rises about five feet above the level of the floor, or fifteen feet above the original surface of the ground. It is but

the highest point of the solid rock of which the whole area is composed, thus permitted, as it were, to project above the surface, and to intrude bare, unadorned, into the mosque. It has on the south-side an open door, cut

CAVE IN THE ROCK.

through the solid stone, which leads by a few steps down to an excavated chamber, about eight feet high and fifteen feet square. Above, is a hole pierced three or four feet through the top of the rock, with a lamp suspended near

it. Such is the general appearance and position of this famous spot. I may add, that if one stamps on a circular marble stone about the centre of the cave, seen in the engraving, hollow sounds and echoes are heard beneath evidencing the existence of considerable underground excavations.

"But what," the reader asks, "means this rock or rocky summit? Why has it been preserved, and preserved *here* as a holy and revered thing?"

To this question various conflicting theories might be rought forward as answers. That it was a draw-well for the fortress of Antonio; that it was the summit of Mount Moriah on which Abraham offered up Isaac; that it was the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite; finally, that it was the "True Sepulchre of our Lord." If I might presume to give an opinion on the subject it would be briefly this: that I cannot accept of the authenticity of any of these proofs, and believe we must wait until further light is thrown on the subject. Meanwhile, the purpose which it originally served remains, in my opinion, an unsolved mystery.

ROUND ABOUT THE CITY.

ROUND ABOUT THE CITY.

CHAPTER XI.

JERUSALEM WITHOUT THE WALLS.

ONE day I visited the Jews' "wailing place," certainly one of the most remarkable spots in the world. It extends 120 feet along the cyclopean wall which surrounded the sacred inclosure, and begins about 300 feet from the south-west corner.

No familiarity with the scenes enacted at this place made it hackneyed to me. To see the Jews met here for prayer; to see them kissing those old stones; to know that this sort of devotion has probably been going on since the Temple was destroyed, and down through the teeming centuries; to watch this continuous stream of sorrow, still sobbing against the old wall, filled me with many thoughts. What light amidst darkness, what darkness amidst light; what undying hopes in the future,

what passionate attachment to the past; what touching superstition, what belief and unbelief.

I next strolled into the Jews' quarter on Mount Zion.

THE JEWS' WAILING PLACE.

It is a wretched, filthy place, squalid as the "liberties" of Dublin, the "slums" of London, or the "closes" of Glasgow or Edinburgh.

I saw one sight on Mount Zion which vividly recalled

the past, and that was a band of lepers. They inhabit a few huts near one of the gates, and are shut off by a wall with only one entrance to their wretched small court and mud dwellings. Ten of those miserable beings came out to beg from us—as they do from every one who is likely to give them alms. They sat afar off, with outstretched arms, directing attention to their sores. There was nothing absolutely revolting in their appearance; but it was unutterably sad to see so many human beings, with all the capacities for enjoying life, thus separated from their kind, creeping out of their mud dens day by day through a long course of years to obtain aid to sustain their miserable existence; and then creeping back again, to talk, to dream, to hope. And for what?

No friendly grasp from relation or friend, no kiss from parent or child, from husband or wife. Dying daily, they daily increase in misery and pain. What more vivid symbol of sin could have been selected than this disease, which destroys the whole man, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, slowly but surely eating his life, and which is incurable, save by the power of God? May He have mercy on all such!

The sight of those sufferers in such a place suggested many a scene in Bible history, above all the compassion of Him who "bore our sicknesses," and restored such pitiable objects to the health and joy of a new existence.

Nor could one fail to associate the helpless condition of lepers with that of the people who still occupy Zion, whose houses are built over the dust of what was once

their own stately palaces, and whose unbelief is now, as it was in the days of the prophets, like unto a deadly leprosy with wounds that have not yet "been closed, neither bound up, nor mollified with ointment." Their sin has been so visibly punished, that we may truly add: —"Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

And before passing beyond the walls, I would like to mention one remarkable feature of Jerusalem. It is its power, in spite of its dust and decay, to attract to itself so many forms of religious thought. The fire which once blazed in it with so pure a flame, still flickers amidst smoke and ashes. Moslem, Jew, and Christian, of every sect, reside among its ruins, or make pilgrimages of devotion or of inquiry to its hallowed precincts.

But we must go out of the city and "view the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down."

Among the first places I went to was the subterranean quarry, the entrance to which is near the Damascus Gate. The nature of this place will be best understood by supposing an immense excavation, out of which it is highly probable the stones were quarried to build the city, so that Jerusalem may be said to be reared over one vast cavern, the roof of which is supported by huge pillars of rock, left untouched by the workmen.

We entered by a narrow hole, through which we had to creep; and after stumbling over *débris* down hill and up hill we found ourselves in the midst of a labyrinth of

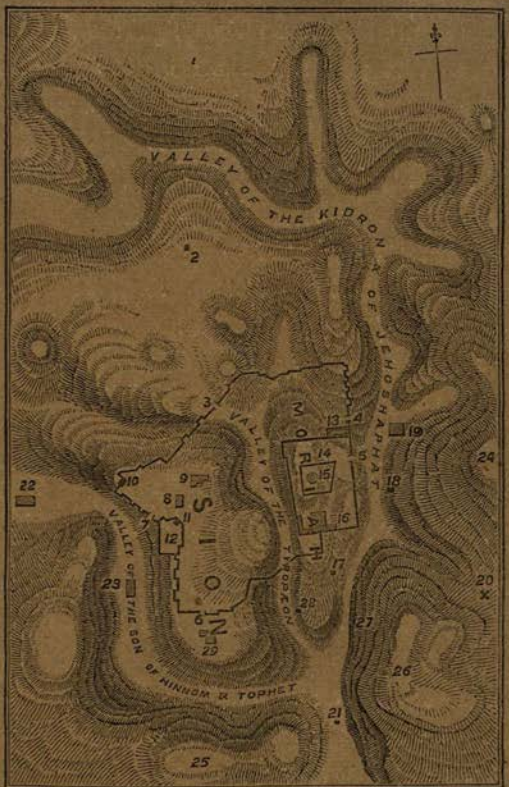
vast caves, whose high arches and wide mouths were lost in darkness. On we went, tottering after our feeble lights long after we lost sight of the eye of day at the entrance. With cavern after cavern on the right and left and ahead of us, we got *eerie*, and began to think, in spite of the lucifers—unknown as an earthly reality to the Jews of old—what would become of us if our lights went out. It is difficult to say how far the quarries extend. I have been told by one who has examined into their inner mysteries that there are walls built up which prevent thorough exploration. It is more than likely that the stones of the Temple were here prepared; for "the house when it was in building was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building." The stone is a white limestone, and must have given a pure and bright appearance to the Temple.

We saw some blocks half cut out of the living rock, but never completed. I know not why such unfinished works as those stones, partly prepared yet never used, are so impressive. They are very old—older than any inhabited building on earth, and ages older than most of our modern ruins—yet they look young, like children that were embalmed at birth. They are monuments not of the past so much as of an expected future—enduring types of designs frustrated, of plans unexecuted, and of hopes unrealised—symbols of the ignorance of man, who plants and builds, until a sudden coming of God revolu-

tionises the world to him. Why, we ask, did not this or that stone fulfil its intended destiny? What stopped the work? What hindered the workman from returning with his mallet and chisel to finish it? What caused the abrupt pause which has not been disturbed for centuries? The stones yet wait in silence, and may wait probably till all man's works are burnt up. And still we go on in the old way, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, rearing palaces, barns, and churches, as if the earth were firm beneath our feet, and time would never end. But we must not indulge in dreamy meditations, lest our lights go out, and the stones at last serve some purpose by entombing our skeletons. We reach the daylight, which, first like a brilliant star, and then a sun, pierces through the gloom from the narrow entrance.

This work of exploration is no easy task with such a temperature. You can fancy what it is to be obliged to poke through holes like a rat, flit through caverns like a bat, and then come into daylight only to pace along under a glare from white rocks, white stony roads, white walls, no shelter anywhere except under an olive, when there is one, or in the cool recesses of a house, which is not to be thought of until evening.

I long to bring the reader to Olivet and Bethany; but let us first take a rapid glance at some of the spots south of the city. There we find a steep, in some places rocky hills, carefully cultivated in terraces, with many olive and fruit trees. This was the Ophel of the olden time. The valley to the east of Ophel is that of Jehoshaphat, or the



Site of Jerusalem. (From a drawing by Mr. Fergusson.)

Scale, 1084 yards to the inch.

1. Scopus.
2. Tombs of the Kings.
3. Damascus Gate.
4. St. Stephen's Gate.
5. Golden Gate.
6. David's Gate.
7. Jaffa Gate.
8. Pool of Hezekiah.
9. The Holy Sepulchre.
10. Jalûd Ruin.
11. Castle of David.
12. Citadel.
13. Pool of Bethesda.
14. The Haram, or Holy Place, containing—
15. The Dome of the Rock, and
16. The Mosques El-Aksa and Omar.
17. Fountain of the Virgin.
18. Pillar of Absalom.
19. Gethsemane.
20. "Shoulder of the Mount of Olives, where "He beheld the city, and wept over it."
21. Enrogel.
22. Upper Pool.
23. Lower Pool.
24. Summit of the Mount of Olives.
25. Hill of Evil Counsel.
26. Mt. of Corruption.
27. Village of Siloam.
28. Pool of Siloam.
29. Sepulchre of David.

Kidron, separating Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. It attains its greatest depth immediately beneath the south-east angle of the Temple. Another valley, it will be observed from the plan, curves in from the west. This is the valley of Hinnom or Tophet.

Perhaps there is no place on earth where so many thoughts of human crime and misery suggest themselves as among the rocky sepulchres of this valley. It must always have been an out-of-the-way, dark, secluded spot. There is no other like it near Jerusalem. The horrible Molech fires which consumed many an agonized child once blazed among these stones. "They have built the high places of Tophet," said the Prophet Jeremiah, "which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart."

On the opposite side, on the Hill of Corruption, where the village of Siloam is now built, Solomon set up his idols in the very sight of the Temple. It was these abominations which Josiah cleared away:—for "he defiled Tophet, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech." "And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the King of Israel had builded, did the king defile."

As if to complete the painful associations, there is pointed out among the rocky hills of Hinnom, immediately below the Hill of Evil Counsel, Aceldama, or

"the field of blood," where, into a caverned pit, now built over, bodies were cast, with hardly any other burial than to lie there under a little sprinkling of earth until

THE POOL OF SILOAM.

turned into corruption. It has been closed for a century, but will ever be associated with the traitor.

No wonder this spot in the valley of Hinnom, with its consuming fires, its vile moral as well as physical corrup-

tion, should have become, as Tophet or Gehenna, a type of Hell.

The inhabitants in the immediate neighbourhood of these infamous spots do not redeem their character. The villagers of Siloam partly live in houses and partly in the old rock tombs, and are notorious thieves—such a collection of scoundreldom as might be the joint product of gipsies, vagabond Jews, and the lowest Arabs. Their presence in Siloam makes all the Mount of Olives unsafe after nightfall to those who are not protected.

But the name Siloam recalls a very different scene, and one for ever associated with the Saviour's power and love. There is no dispute whatever regarding the site of the old Pool, which has never been challenged. It is about 53 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 19 feet deep. It is surrounded by an old wall, which, it has been suggested, is the same as that of which it is recorded:—"Shallum . built the wall and the pool of Siloam by the king's garden." Above it is an arch, under which a flight of steps descends to the water that flows past, clear and pure, into the pool. In this the blind man was sent to wash.

This one fact sheds a light and glory over the whole place. We can easily picture to ourselves the poor man proceeding with his clay-covered eyes, his anxious and eager faith subduing his doubts and fears, until the water bathes his face, and then!—he sees for the first time those very rocks, perhaps that same old wall; and better than all, with the eye of the spirit, as well as of the

flesh, he sees Jesus as "the Sent" of God, and as his Saviour. This Pool of Siloam is fed from sources which extend towards Zion, and possibly Moriah. It is conducted down to the valley opposite the village of Siloam,

THE FOUNTAIN OF THE VIRGIN.

where it flows out a sparkling stream, round which women were merrily washing clothes, and men giving drink to their horses, as we passed. A conduit also has been traced, which connects it with the Fountain of the

Virgin, which is still higher up the valley, and is reached by a descent of twenty-six steps. It exhibits the curious phenomenon of an intermittent fountain, ebbing and flowing at certain intervals. The overflow of Siloam now gladdens the lower portion of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, near En-Rogel, which was once "the king's gardens." This spot is green and fertile still; and when one has seen what water has done for the gardens of Urtas, he can understand how beautiful those king's gardens must once have been.

ROUND ABOUT THE CITY.

CHAPTER XII.

BETHANY AND THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

NOW let us to Olivet and Bethany.

The moment one leaves the gate of St. Stephen, which leads down to the Kidron, and thence to Olivet, he is struck with the unartistic roughness of the road. The last thing on earth one would expect to see would be a city gate without a road leading to it. Yet there is no road here but a path steep and rough as one on the face of a Highland hill.

A timid man feels uneasy in riding down it, unless his horse be very sure-footed. He has every reason for fearing a *glissade* over the loose small stones. It has to all appearance been left to take care of itself since history began. But it is nevertheless the old highway to Bethany

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

and Jericho. Fortunately, the descent is only two or three hundred feet.

At the bottom, when the dry bed of the brook Kidron is passed, one finds himself in the angle between the road which leads directly over Olivet to Bethany and that which leads to the same point along the side of the hill to the right. At this spot tradition has placed the Garden of Gethsemane—an unlikely place, in my humble opinion, from its want of seclusion; for those roads must always have met here. How many quiet nooks there are up the valley!

The priests, with their usual taste and their wonderful talent for spoiling every place which they wish to make sacred after their own fashion, have enclosed the fine old olives, which it is assumed marked the spot, within a square of high whitewashed walls, like what might surround a graveyard, and have made an ugly garden with flowerbeds within it! I did not enter the place.

Who, were it even the actual spot, could indulge in such feelings as it is calculated to excite, with a monk at hand exhibiting as holy places "the cave of agony," "the spot where the disciples fell asleep," "where Judas betrayed Him," &c.? It would have been great enjoyment could I have sat alone, under those patriarchal trees, with the rough hill-side or a bit of greensward beneath my feet. As it was, I preferred an undisturbed and quiet look over the wall at the grand old olives. It was something to think of all they have witnessed during the centuries in which they have been silently gazing at Jerusalem and on passers by.

I ascended Olivet for the first time by the road which rises almost directly from Gethsemane to the mosque on the top of the hill, and which from thence descends to Bethany.

After enjoying the wide-spreading view from the summit, which embraces the wilderness of Judea, the Dead Sea, the eastern wall of the ridge of Moab, and the mountains round about Jerusalem, I descended to Bethany. I was not disappointed with its appearance. Had it been bare rock it would still have been holy ground.

The village consists, as all others in Palestine do, of brown mud hovels with encircling mud walls—dust, confusion, children, dogs, and poverty. Everything is squalid. But yet there are patches of greenery and trees to be seen, and the singing of birds to be heard; while the broken ground, and glens, with the glimpses into the steep descent which leads to Jericho, give to it a certain wild, sequestered character of its own. When it was well cultivated and well wooded, it must have been of all the places near Jerusalem the most peaceful as well as the most picturesque.

Like an old familiar melody, one loves to repeat the miracle which will for ever be associated with Bethany, and to ponder over the rest and repose which Jesus found for his weary heart in the loving responses of this family of Mary and Martha.

We returned from Bethany by the old road from Jericho, which first ascends from the village for about 100 yards, then descends along one side of a wady which

THE OLD TOWER AT THE JAFFA GATE, JERUSALEM.

opens out from the roots of Olivet, and, ascending the opposite side, debouches on the high ground leading across the flank of Olivet to Jerusalem. It there reaches a point opposite the south-east angle of the Temple, and from thence rapidly descends to Gethsemane. The place where Jesus beheld the city and wept over it is unquestionably that point. There Jerusalem suddenly bursts on the sight, but upon descending a short distance further down the hill the view of it is rapidly concealed.

I spent my last Sunday in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. It was a day never to be forgotten; one of those heavenly days which cannot die, but become part of one's life. Alone, with no companion but my Bible, I went along the Via Dolorosa, passed out by St. Stephen's gate, descended to Gethsemane, and from thence pursued the old road already described, which leads to Bethany and Jericho, by the western slope of Olivet overlooking the valley of Jehoshaphat.

At the summit of the short ascent a few ledges of limestone rock, carpeted with greensward, crop out beside the path, and afford a natural resting-place, of which I availed myself. The old wall and the well-known corner of the Haram Area were immediately opposite me, and so visibly near in the pure transparent atmosphere that the stones could be counted, and the green tufts of the plants among them.

The day was of course cloudless and hot, but it was not oppressive, for the air was stirred by a gentle breeze with a mountain freshness in it. Though the city was so near

with most of its people pursuing their usual avocations both within and without the walls, yet no sound disturbed the intense repose except, strange to say, the crowing of cocks, as if at early morn, and the shouts of a solitary

A STREET IN JERUSALEM.

peasant who was urging his plough across the once busy but now deserted slopes of Ophel. I gazed on Jerusalem until it seemed to be a dream—a white ghostly city in the silent air. My thoughts took no fixed shape, but were lost in the presence of some undefined source of awe,

wonder, and sorrow. I was recalled, however, to what was very near when I opened my Bible, and read these words: *As He went out of the Temple*—probably by the Double Gate in the south wall I have already described, with the great stones all around,—one of His disciples saith unto Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering saith unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as *He sat upon the Mount of Olives over against the Temple*, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him privately, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" And if Jesus on His way to Bethany "sat upon the Mount of Olives *over against the Temple*," there is certainly no place I could discover which was so likely to be the very spot as the one which I occupied.

Here, in this holy place untouched by the hand of man, unnoticed, and apparently unknown, I read the prophecies, parables, and exhortations of our Lord uttered in the hearing of His holy Apostles, and recorded for all time in the 24th and 25th chapters of St. Matthew. They include, among others, the prophecies of His first coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, then in her glory, now so desolate—with his second coming at the end of the world; the parables of the ten virgins and of the ten talents, and the trial of love at the last judgment—all ending in the touching announcement, "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of Man is be-

trayed to be crucified!" "All these sayings" I read undisturbed while sitting over against the old wall within which the Temple once rose in its strength and glory, but not one stone of which is now left upon another.

THE JEWISH BURYING-GROUND.

While pondering over the words of Christ, I was struck by seeing near me a fig-tree, with its branches putting forth leaves, and in some places young figs. The unexpected illustration of the words I had just read, as here

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, FROM THE CITY WALL.

first uttered, "When the fig-tree putteth forth leaves, ye know summer is nigh," brought to my mind that surely these were spoken at the same season of the year as that in which I read them, and I was at once reminded that the day was Palm Sunday, the anniversary of the very time when our Lord had wept here over Jerusalem, and had also delivered those discourses.

When in Palestine I felt that there were times in which the past seemed so present, Christ and His word so living and real, that had any one suddenly appeared and said, "I saw Him and heard Him," I should not have been surprised: and this day was one of them.

From this spot I went to that other, very near, where our Lord wept over Jerusalem.

There is one feature of the view from this spot which I was not prepared for, and which greatly impressed me. It is the Jewish burying-ground. For centuries, I know not how many, Jews of every country have come to die in Jerusalem that they might be buried in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Their wish to lie here is connected with certain superstitious views regarding the Last Judgment (which they believe is to take place on this spot), and certain privileges which are to be then bestowed on all who are here interred. And thus thousands, possibly millions, of the most bigoted and superstitious Israelites, from every part of the world, have in the evening of life flocked to this the old "city of their solemnities," that after death they

might be gathered to their fathers beneath the shadow of its walls.

I never saw a graveyard to me so impressive. Scutari is far more extensive, and more terribly deathlike. But from its huddled monuments and crowded trees, it is impossible to penetrate its dark and complicated recesses. Here, there are no monuments, and no trees. Each grave is covered by a flat stone with Hebrew inscriptions, and has nothing between it and the open sky. These stones pave the whole eastern slope of the valley. Every inch of ground where a human body can lie is covered. Along the banks of the Kidron, up the side of Olivet, and across the road leading from Bethany to Jerusalem, stretches this vast city of the dead.

Before I returned to Jerusalem I wandered among the solitudes of Olivet—hardly knowing where. I sat and read my Bible under one tree, and then under another; descended some glen, or unknown and solitary nook, feeling only that this was Olivet, and that the whole hill was consecrated of old by the bodily presence of the Saviour. Most thankful, however, was I to know that the *Person*, not the place, was holy—that His love was not local but universal; and that not only among the silent hills of Palestine, in Jerusalem, Nazareth, or Tiberias, but in our crowded cities, common-place villages, and in every house, in every room, nook and corner of the world Jesus may be known, loved, obeyed, and glorified. With thanksgiving I repeated, on Olivet:—

"There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of th' everlasting chime,
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusty lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their busy task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF JERUSALEM.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DAY'S JOURNEY TOWARDS JERICHO.

LIKE all travellers in Palestine, we of course paid a visit to the Jordan and Dead Sea.

To accomplish the journey, we were advised to take a guard. The very proposal threw a certain air of romantic danger over the expedition. I almost began to regret that I had no supply of bullets for my revolver; and to become painfully doubtful of its even being free from rust, to say nothing of the trustworthiness of the caps, should the trigger ever be drawn.

But if it came to fighting, which I sincerely deprecated, I had fortunately no doubt whatever of my utter incapacity to hit either man or horse, should I be ool enough to try; and was confident that I would adopt

no other course in the event of a "scrimmage," than that of either yielding with all grace to the Ishmaelite, or, if possible, galloping off.

There was no use, however, in speculating as to how one would feel or look, if stripped and robbed in the wilderness. It was enough to know that we had resolved to see certain places, and that an escort was necessary, come weal or woe.

Let me illustrate the position of a modern traveller wishing to see the Dead Sea, by a parallel case which might have occurred to a Sassenach wishing to visit Loch Lomond in the days of the Sheik Rob Roy, when his tribe of the Gregarach were in possession of one side of the lake. The traveller, we will suppose, reaches Glasgow on horseback a few weeks after leaving London, and brings with him a letter of introduction to Bailie Nicol Jarvie from some Scotch merchant in the metropolis. He applies to the Bailie for advice as to the safest manner of accomplishing his purpose of seeing the frontier wilderness of the Highlands.

The magistrate speaks of its danger; and is ready, over his ale in the Salt-market, to narrate his own adventures and escapes at Aberfoyle—but comforts the traveller by the assurance that the red-haired Sheik, Rob, happens to be in town; that he is a friend of his, having more than once saved him from the clutch of the Pasha Provost; and that he will easily arrange for a guard, on black-mail being paid. The Sassenach smiles at the idea, points to his fire-arms, talks contemptuously of the savage Gregarach,

enlarges on the grandeur of the Saxon, and resolves to go with his own servant John only.

The Sheik hears this, and vows vengeance for being thus done out of £5, which would keep his spleuchan or pouch full of tobacco for months. So he summons his henchman, the Dugald Cratur, and tells him to be off to the Wady of Balmaha, and there assemble half a dozen of his tribe, to lie in wait among the heather and behind the rocks with their long guns, until they see a white-faced Sassenach with trousers, coming along—then to fire some powder, rush at him with a yell, roar Gaelic in his ear, rob him—but do no more. "The next chiel," adds the Sheik, taking a snuff, "will be more ceevil."

Thus would act in all probability the Rob Roy of the Taamireh, Allaween, Anazi, Beni Sakker, or any other tribe. No doubt at Loch Lomond the Graham might dispute the right with the Gregarach of keeping the Wady of Balmaha as a preserve or net for travellers, and they might accordingly fight Rob or Dugald, when travellers were under their protection and paying them black-mail. So might the Anazi fight the Taamireh.

Still it is better for every reason to pay and take your chance, assured that then you are, in ordinary circumstances—the extraordinary being easily ascertained before leaving Jerusalem—quite as safe in going to most spots in Palestine as to most spots in Europe, especially Italy. And there is one real advantage gained by such arrangements, that is the security given, and respected, that any property stolen will be replaced.

A tall Arab Sheik, in a shabby dressing-gown, with turban above, and bare legs thrust into clouted shoes below, did us the honour of squatting himself on our divan one evening, and of agreeing to protect us with the lives of all his tribe. The trifling sum asked for this service, it must be presumed, expressed the small extent of our risk and the little value put upon the lives of the warriors who might be sacrificed.

The day before we started I was loitering in the streets and by-lanes of the city seeing what I could see. When opposite the Austrian Consul's house I was attracted by a troop of Arab horsemen drawn up in loose array. A handsomely-dressed Turk was calling over their names. They had formed the guard, I was told, of the Duke of Modena from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and were now being paid off. In my life I never beheld such a set of ragamuffins!

The horses were far superior in their breeding to those who rode them; they were small, thin, and wiry, but with a life in their eyes and a defleshed firmness of muscle which marked them as fit for enduring hard work.

Their riders wore the usual Arab dress. They had kaffiahs bound with cord round their heads; their cotton or camel-hair garments were sufficiently thin and loose; their feet were stuck into coarse leather sandals or boots; and they were accoutred with long spears and guns slung over their backs. Their faces were studies! Each rose from its own neck a distinct individual face,

with all the essentials of a face, but these were arranged with an art which I had never seen before, concentrating scoundrel in every feature, and forming a combined whole to me quite unparalleled.

I singled out two or three, and pictured to myself the feelings of any decorous parson or sensitive lady, who might fall into such hands on the lonely and bituminous shores of the Dead Sea, and who might endeavour to read their fate in the expression of such countenances! One man, a black, seemed to me the personification of animal ugliness.

Next day, when our escort was mustered, I discovered among them my black friend, and some of my other studies of human villany. But I am bound in justice to add, that, after having been politely introduced to them, and making their acquaintance through our mutual friend Hadji Ali, and having done all I could to discover the cloven foot in them, the impression made upon me was, that they were all very good-natured and obliging fellows, inclined no doubt, like all the children of Jacob as well as of Esau, to *backsheesh*, but on the whole pleasant and agreeable. I have no doubt, that in the event of a fight, they would have fired their guns in a way I could not have done mine; but I have also no doubt that had I bolted they would have accompanied me (in kindness no doubt), and have even led the way far ahead.

We clattered over the stones of the Via Dolorosa, passed through St. Stephen's Gate, ascended the slope of

Olivet, skirted the mud hovels of Bethany, and immediately began the rapid descent of the gorge leading for about twenty miles to Jericho. This road has been made for ever famous, not so much, strange to say, by the fact that along it our Lord journeyed, as by his glorious parable of the Good Samaritan, in which the religion of charity, and his own universal love to his "neighbour," are so grandly illustrated.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

The descent from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea is, as the reader knows, a half greater than that from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean. In round numbers, it is twice 1,300 feet from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean, three times 1,300 from Jerusalem to the surface of the Dead Sea, and four times 1,300 to the *bottom* of the Dead Sea. We

had thus, in the short space, to make a descent of 3,900 feet to the *shore* of the Dead Sea.

The part of the descent immediately below Bethany is the steepest. There is a path here of loose stones and smooth rock, which rapidly plunges into the head of the long valley.

It must have been up this steep our Saviour toiled, on his momentous journey from Jericho to Bethany. And to the summit of this ascent, or possibly from it, gazing along the windings of the glen, must Martha and Mary have turned their longing and expectant gaze for the coming of the Saviour to heal their brother Lazarus. Up this road the wondering crowd had accompanied Him from Jericho, with one joyful man among them, the blind beggar Bartimeus, who, having received his sight, beheld with a greater sense of novelty and wonder, than any traveller before or since, those wild scaurs and rocky uplands—unless indeed his eyes were fixed on one object only, Jesus, the Son of David, who had mercy on him.

On reaching the bottom of this rapid descent, and passing a well and the ruins of an old khan, our road ran right along the bottom of the valley. It was a bare, bleak, dry, limestone bit of scenery, but not tamer or more uninteresting than many places which I have traversed, even in Scotland. But after a few miles, when we got entangled among broken uplands and deep gorges, lonely, wild, and dreary in the extreme, things began to have a wilderness and Dead Sea look.

We rested at a spot well known to every traveller,

near an old inn or khan now in ruins, which was famous as a sort of rendezvous for brigands, and where Sir Francis Henneker was robbed and wounded forty years ago. We did not, however, even catch a glimpse of man or boy prowling near.

Was this the "inn" alluded to by the Saviour, to which the good Samaritan is represented as bringing the suffering stranger? It may have been some well-known spot like this, the parable gaining, to those who heard it, more vividness and reality by a local allusion.

I may mention here, that, strange to say, this was the only part of our journey in Palestine where we saw any signs of cruelty. Two Arabs going to Jericho were driving before them a miserable skeleton-looking horse with a knee hideously diseased. The brute could hardly touch the ground with its agonised limb, but ever and anon it did so, leaving spots of blood on the road.

It was vain to expostulate with its drivers; so for the sake of our own feelings, as well as for the sake of the wretched creature, we resolved to purchase it and shoot it. The skin alone, we thought, could be of any value to its owners; and our dragoman agreed that our offer of 100 piastres, about £1, was therefore a handsome price. But it was indignantly refused, and 1,000 piastres demanded! And so the brute was driven on, at a rate, too, which, fortunately for us at least, enabled it to get so far ahead that we lost sight of it.

Another act, equally out of harmony with the spirit of the good Samaritan, was perpetrated by our escort.

They seized a lamb from a flock and drove it on before them. We expostulated as earnestly as did its owner, but the deed was justified by the chiefs on some principle of black-mail which in their opinion made the claim a right, though we more than suspected it to be a robbery. So much for the unloving spirit still seen on the way from Jericho to Jerusalem.

Soon after passing the old khan, we entered a narrow path full of interest. Immediately below us, to the left, was a deep gorge that cut its way through bare rocky precipices, between which, five hundred feet down, a fresh full mountain-stream rushed along to the plain of the Jordan. This was the Wady Kelt, and in all probability the brook Cherith where Elijah was supported during the famine. The cry of ravens was still echoing from the wild precipices. We saw remains of old aqueducts, and other buildings.

The precipices were also dotted here and there with cave-like holes, the first mementoes we had seen of the old hermits who once lived here, like grey bats, nourishing their strange religious life. Remains of old chapels, in which they had worshipped and had caught some glimpses of a higher life and of a better country, were visible on the heights.

On and down we went, winding through this arid waste, until at last we saw the plain of Jericho stretching below us, dotted with verdure produced by the mountain springs, and stretching, a grey flat with patches of wood here and there, until its bare shore-like surface was

fringed, ten miles off, by the line of vegetation shading the unseen and deep bed of the Jordan. Beyond the Jordan rose the grand ridge of Moab, and to the right appeared the northern bay of the Dead Sea.

Down, down, we crept, always thinking we would in a few minutes reach the lowest level, yet always finding a lower still. But every lane has a turning, and so had ours; and right glad were we when it turned to the left, as the shades of evening were drawing over us, and we saw our white tents, pitched where those of many a thankful and weary traveller had been pitched before, under the Quarantania, and near the Ain es Sultan, or Fountain of Elisha.

Oh, what a blessed sight are those tents! What a paradise do they appear to a weary man after a day's ride, when everything is hot, from the sky above to the earth beneath, and to the very waters under the earth.

Your horse begins to neigh, and to pace along with cocked ears, the prospect of fodder being as cheering to him as Mohammed's dinner is to us. And then, after ablutions, how delightful to lean down on the camp bed; and after dinner and pleasant friendly talk about the sights and adventures of the day, to go out in the cool night, with the world of stars all twinkling in the unsurpassed sky of this lower region; to catch picturesque glimpses of the Arabs in the dim light around their fires; to *hear* the awful stillness of the silent land: and then to sleep, as motionless as a desert stone!

But before falling into this unconscious state, we here

exhibited a few fireworks which we had brought from London (cockney fashion) for the purpose of amusing the Arabs, or maybe with the innocent hope of awing the desert tribes by a revelation of wonder and power.

The musical snuff-box was our *opus magnum*, but the Roman candles were our most imposing spectacle.

I had the honour, as the Hakeem Pasha, of letting them off in the presence of what the newspapers would describe as an "attentive and admiring audience." They shot aloft with great success, and "fortunately no accident occurred." Our Arabs were delighted, even Meeki smiled, and condescendingly manifested a sense of agreeable surprise. Had any robbers been prowling about the plain looking for plunder, it is more than likely, as we afterwards concluded, that our fireworks, instead of frightening them away, would rather have attracted them to our tents.

We gave our escort a homely supper of rice mixed with various ingredients prepared by the cook. They eagerly seized the food with their fingers, dexterously moulded it, and chucked it into their mouths, as they squatted round the large dish placed in the centre of their circle. In return they danced one of their dances, if dance it could be called where the body and not the foot moved.

Twelve of them formed a line, while their chief with drawn sword stood facing them. They then began with a low monotonous chant, or rather howl, to move backwards and forwards, while he moved, and swayed, and

ducked, making fantastic movements with his sword. And so on it went, utterly unintelligible to us. It had, of course, a meaning, to one able and learned enough to appreciate it; but to us it had none, and sundry attempts on Hadji Ali's part to make it plain, only served to convince us that he, too, knew nothing about it. So we were glad when it ceased, and we could retire to our tents without giving offence.

These men underwent a wonderful amount of physical endurance. During our journey, they hunted partridges (which they fired at only when the birds sat) and gazelles along the whole road—now running down the valleys, and again rushing to the tops of the rocks with unwearied perseverance and activity. They managed to kill a gazelle and a brace of partridges, which we bought from them. Yet at the end of their day's journey, which they had made double by their exertions, they challenged us to race them; and for about two hundred yards they kept up with our horses urged to their highest speed, which, however, it must be admitted, was not equal to the Derby stride.

I remembered, while seeing them, the fact of Elijah running before the chariot of Ahab from Carmel to Jezreel. His was not, after all, such a feat of physical strength, considering the state of the roads, and the probably somewhat slow driving of the king, as was that of our Arabs.

Next morning we enjoyed a view of the cliffs of Quarantania, which we had examined rapidly the evening

before. The high pyramidal precipice was honeycombed with hermits' cells. A ruined chapel was on the summit.

It is strange indeed to think of the world of thought, politics, and opinions, which interested those hermits, as they once crept from cavern to cavern, or sat in groups on their limestone seats, gazing from their rocks of sure defence, over the plain, on to the Dead Sea, and wild hills beyond, until they died, and were laid beside old friends in a dark cave.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE JORDAN AND THE DEAD SEA.

WE started at early morn for the Jordan and Dead Sea. The day promised to be hot, if indeed a cool one was ever known at the bottom of this singular hollow since the day it was formed by its restless and hot parents, the earthquake and volcano.

After visiting the Ain es Sultân, and rejoicing in the delicious though not very cool water springing from its limestone cave, we gazed on the great mounds on every side, speculating in vain on their relation to ancient Jericho. It is probable that the first Jericho was here, and that the Jericho of the Gospels was near the spot where the mountain road we had traversed debouched

ON THE BANKS OF THE JORDAN.

into the plain. The so-called Jericho is modern, and may possibly mark the site of Gilgal.

We struck across the plain to the Jordan. We pushed through a tangled wilderness of low trees, and passed Jericho, that capital of rascaldom, robbery, poverty, and vice, and soon began to pace over the bare flat of the Ghor.

We passed in succession, and after considerable intervals, three steep beaches, leading down from a higher to a lower level, and each marking a former shore of the river. These shores have been occupied probably during inundations, and when the Jordan flowed at higher levels. It was not until we descended the fourth beach that we reached the narrow plain through which it now flows. There its muddy and rapid waters rushed in eddying circles like those of a glacier stream, between tangled brushwood of various kinds, and trees, and tall reeds that bent their feathered heads in the quiet air, there being no wind to shake them. On the other side, perpendicular banks of white clay, with the edge of a higher bank appearing beyond, hemmed the water in. It did not seem more than one hundred feet broad.

Some of our party and the Arabs bathed in it. I deferred that duty, chiefly from fear of being swept off by the stream, until we reached the Dead Sea. The Arabs revealed a very simple toilet, consisting merely of a long shirt, and a cotton or camel's hair dressing-gown.

We lingered some time on the bank of the river, cutting walking-sticks for mementoes, and also some bulrush-

heads—an innocent amusement verily, and affording a striking enough contrast to boar-hunting and other "manly sports."

As we rode towards the Dead Sea, and turned away for ever from the Jordan, I began to recall all the grand events associated with the river and the plain through which it flowed.

Somewhere beyond and above us was Pisgah, from which that grand man Moses, the Saint Paul of the old dispensation, saw revealed for the first time the vision of his life—the land on which he was not to tread until he appeared on it in glory along with the Messiah of whom he had testified. The Jordan was full of memories, dating from the famous day when the ark stayed its waters, and the armies of Israel defiled before it after their long wilderness journey into the Holy Land of Promise—Caleb and Joshua alone connecting them with Egypt—downwards through the times of Elijah and Elisha, Naaman the Syrian, and John the Baptist, until the Lord himself was consecrated in its waters for the public work of his ministry. Behind us was Jericho, associated with the victories of Joshua, the school of the Prophets, the healing miracles of Jesus;—and holy Gilgal, also long the seat of worship before the Tabernacle was pitched at Shiloh, and the place where Samuel and Saul and David and the ancient Church had prayed, and offered sacrifices, and sung their songs of praise.

How desolate and dreary is all this scene now! It is the haunt of brigands, and the home of a few poor de-

based peasants. The great forests of palm-trees which filled the plain for miles together, with the fields of sugar-cane, have all disappeared, and tangled thickets of valueless trees and shrubs alone remain. The granaries of corn which could feed the armies of Israel, enabling them to dispense with the manna, have perished: while but a few patches of cultivation are left to testify of the former fertility. Desolation everywhere, and the stones of emptiness!

The very sites of Jericho and Gilgal are uncertain, and wild beasts or wilder men roam where Holy Prophets taught, where the Baptist preached, and where the Son of God performed his miracles of love and power.

When we reached the shore of the Dead Sea, we all gazed in silence on the scene before us. What were our first impressions? Putting aside the associations of God's anger and righteous judgment which are irresistibly suggested by all we know of those degraded races who dwelt somewhere on its borders or on spots where its waters rest, the scene was decidedly pleasing. True, it is not picturesque. The want of life on this part of its waters makes it dull and uninteresting, without, however, giving it the dreary look of many a Highland loch—such, for example, as that darkest and most barren of all I have ever seen, Coruisk in Skye. Nor is the mountain range of its shores apparently "bleak and blasted," like the sides of a volcano, but, generally speaking, it is clothed with what looks like herbage, though it may be but low shrubs; while several beautiful and luxuriant wadies de-

bouch on its shores. And then there was a delicious breeze blowing over it, sending fresh-looking tiny waves to the shore; and the water was so marvellously clear and transparent, and we were so hot and deliquescent, that an ablution was anticipated with peculiar pleasure.

It is an error to suppose that there is actually no life

THE DEAD SEA.

of plant or animal possible within the influence of its so-called noxious vapours. Plants do grow on its border; and further south, birds are seen not only flying over it but swimming or wading in its waters. No fish have as yet been discovered in it; and this no one who touches its waters will be surprised at, assuming that fish have

tastes like men! But one must draw upon fancy more than on what is seen by the eye to make the Dead Sea so very dreadful as it is generally supposed to be.

We bathed of course, and the experiences gained thereby are such as its waters alone afford. Every one knows what a horrid taste it has. No mixture of vinegar, alum,

THE DEAD SEA.

and sulphur, or any similar compound which would fret the skin and pucker the tongue, can give any idea of it. One must taste the deceptive liquid, so clear and beautiful, yet so vile and nauseous, in order to appreciate its composition; and one must let his lips, cracked and blistered with the sun, and his face, punctured with

mosquitoes and other insects, be touched by this limpid wash, before he can estimate its energy.

Its buoyancy is also well known, but one must swim through its heavy waters to realise the novel sensation of being unable to sink. The first attempt to swim never fails to produce shouts of laughter—a dangerous levity, as giving admission to the water by the lips. The moment we breast its waves, we are astonished to find our feet flying up to the surface, and all our old ideas of equilibrium vanish. The most comfortable attitude is either floating on the back, or sitting in the water with a gentle movement of the hands to balance our water-seat; and then the ease, quiet, and composure with which our object can be accomplished inaugurates a new idea in aquatics. Some travellers tell us that they have dived or attempted to dive into these depths. The very idea would have terrified me!

I felt uneasy once when losing connection with terra firma, and had a vision of a depth of possibly 1,300 feet, near if not beneath me. Might not the edge of the abyss be but a few yards off? And the idea of hanging over such a precipice, with who knows what below, was enough to make one look to the pebbles at his feet for comfort. Besides, I did not see how anybody with only hands for paddles, and without the help of a screw, could ever force his way through those leaden depths. We enjoyed our bath exceedingly, felt much refreshed by it, and did not find the pungent effect of the water on the skin peculiarly disagreeable.

In riding along its shore before ascending the hills, we were struck by the appearance of an island near its western end. I remarked how strange it was that no such island was noted in any map. "It must be mirage," we said. Yet surely no mirage could create an island so clear and well-defined as that! But being on our guard against deception, we rejected the evidence of sense, and fell back on faith in the map. There was no island; but had there been one it could not have been more distinct.

The ride to Mar Saba was long and tedious. We were, I think, about eleven hours on horseback from the time we left Ain es Sultân until we reached the monastery. Travellers in the East will smile at this. But I did not smile, except grimly. I never was exposed, except once in the far West, to such oppressive heat, and we had no shelter of any kind. But I had fortunately a noble horse, which ambled along with a brave unfaltering step. I wish he could have known how much I pitied him, and how fully I appreciated the unselfish manner in which he did his work.

The scenery was altogether different from anything I had ever seen in my life or ever expect to see again. It realised all that can be imagined of a dry and parched land.

We did not meet a human being. The silence was broken only, as I rode alone ahead, by the beat of the horse's hoofs and his strong breathing under the sweltering heat. A glare of light streamed from earth and sky.

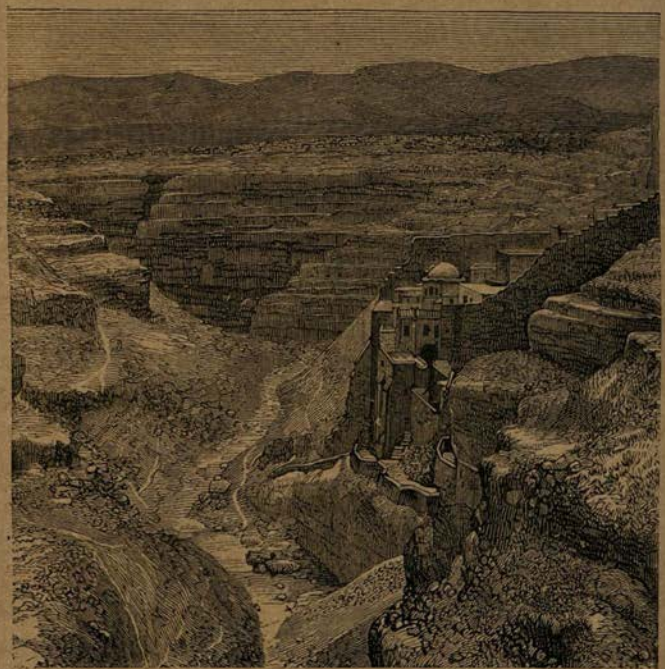
We crossed dry plains, and ascended along the narrow path which zigzags up and up to the summit of the ridge. Everywhere desolation, as if the fire of heaven had scorched the rocks, and ten thousand furious torrents had denuded the valleys, and left great white mounds and peaks of clay and limestone, like a series of gigantic cones, along the hillside. I have no distinct ideas of the journey beyond impressions of heat, glare, and dreariness, of bare rocks, narrow paths, deep ravines, valleys bare and wild as might be seen in the depths of an ocean along which icebergs had ploughed their way, tossing down hills of *débris*, to be moulded into fantastic forms by the roaring tides or whirlpools. More definite pictures my memory does not retain.

That one day of life in the wilderness quite satisfied my fancy. But my memory does retain with more distinct clearness the satisfaction which I experienced when about sunset we went pacing along the edge of the Kidron gorge, and knew that Mar Saba was near.

The approach to this famous old place is along one of the most picturesque paths in Palestine, or indeed in any country. The Kidron, with the help no doubt of earthquakes, has cut for itself during long ages a tortuous course several hundred feet deep. The rocks which rise from its bed in sheer precipices are so close at the top that a one-arched bridge could span them. This deep ravine winds along like a huge railway cutting until it reaches the Monastery.

That wonderful building, the hospice of pilgrims during

many centuries, had its origin with the hermits—*tradition* says to the number of 15,000—who once sought refuge from persecution in this place of solitude and defence.



THE MONASTERY OF MAR SABA.

The precipices are full of caves. These were enlarged, and fashioned, by the aid of walls closing up apertures and connecting jutting strata, into something like houses,

or cells rather, by the anchorites. One abode communicated with another, a hundred feet below or above it, by narrow paths and tortuous holes, such as a fox might creep through with caution; and there they lived—God alone, who feeds the wild beasts of the desert, knows how!—on herbs and water, nourishing skeleton bodies containing strange minds, whose ideas belonged to a world of thought we know not of.

But how can I give an idea of the convent? Well, imagine a cell scooped out between the ledges of those rocks, then several others near it, and then a cave enlarged into a chapel, and this chapel becoming the parish church of the wild glen, and being surrounded by other cells and houses built on this ledge of rock, and others below on another ledge reached by stairs, and others on story below story, and so down the face of the precipice, cells and chapels and houses being multiplied, until, from the ridge above to the stream below, a beehive has been formed, which is finally defended by high walls and two strong towers.

If you can fancy this hanging nest of bees and drones, you have an idea of Mar Saba. Its walls protect it from the incursions of the Bedouin. It is a haven of repose in the wilderness to every pilgrim. It can accommodate hundreds in its endless honeycombs; and is the *beau idéal* of a monastery, such as one reads about in tales of the Crusades and of the middle ages.

To enter it the traveller requires a letter of introduction from the ecclesiastical superior of the monks at Jeru-

salem. This we had obtained. A basket to receive it was lowered from one of the high towers by a dot representing a monk. This form is always gone through, and only when the letter is read, and not till then, is the gate opened to pilgrim or traveller. The poor shrivelled, dried-up, and half-starved monks were very civil, giving us coffee and wine in a comfortable refectory. Those who can converse with them say that they are very stupid and ignorant. Yet the place seemed to be a very paradise for study, with its repose, wild scenery, solitude, and antiquity.

We saw of course all the sights—such as the skulls of 10,000 martyrs. Oh, for the brains and eyes, for a few minutes only, of one of these, to feel as he felt, and to see as he saw! The wish could not be gratified; and so the skulls taught us nothing which other skulls could not impart.

We encamped outside the monastery. It was a glorious night. When all were asleep, I left the tent to enjoy it, and also, let me add, to get some water to drink. The moonlight, the cool air, the deep shadows of the rocks, the silent towers shining in the moonlight, and the dreams of the past, made the hour delightful. But a prowling jackal or wolf—for there are still many of each kind in the neighbourhood—induced me to return to my tent, and to forget Mar Saba for a time in sleep.

We had a short ride next day to Jerusalem up the Kedron Valley. This is beyond doubt the finest approach

to the city, which from it has an elevation and citadel-look afforded by no other point of view;—the wall and buildings of the Haram Area rising above the Valley of Jehoshaphat, as seen in the view of "En Rogel from the South."

SOUTH FROM JERUSALEM.

SOUTH FROM JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HOME OF THE PATRIARCHS.

THERE is one remarkable peculiarity in the Bible, as a revelation of God's will to man—or rather of the many books which make up the one which we call the Bible—that it is a record of historical events, extending over thousands of years, all of which occurred in many different places, but these principally situated within a very small territory.

Accordingly there is hardly a hill or valley, stream or fountain, town or village in Palestine which has not been the home of some person or the scene of some event known and familiar to the Church of Christ. Every spot is consecrated by holy associations. And so in journeying through the land, we almost every hour visit some sacred locality. Thus, for example, in one day's ride

south from Jerusalem, after leaving the city by the old Jewish tower at the gate of Jaffa, we cross the plain of Rephidim, pass close to the tomb of Rachel, visit Bethlehem, drink at the pools of Solomon, stand on the plain of Mamre and by the well of Abraham, wind among the vineyards of Eshcol, and end with Hebron.

This was our day's ride, and let me tell the reader something of what we saw in so brief a journey.

As to the general aspect of the country, it is beyond doubt the least picturesque in Palestine, and, apart from associations, does not possess any attractive feature. The hills which cluster over this upland plateau are like straw beehives, or rather, let me say, like those boys' tops which are made to spin by a string wound round them, but turned upside down, the grooves for the string representing the encircling ledges of the limestone strata, and the peg a ruined tower on the summit.

Imagine numbers of such hills placed side by side, with a narrow deep hollow between them filled with soil, their declivities a series of bare shelves of grey rock,—the rough path worming its way round about, up and down, with here and there broader intervals of flat land, and here and there the hillsides covered with shrubs and dwarf oaks,—and you will have some idea of the nature of the country between Jerusalem and Hebron.

In some places, as about Bethlehem, there are olive plantations, and signs of rapid improvement. An industrious population could very soon transform these barren hills into terraces rich with "corn and wine." Were

these limestone ledges once more provided with walls, to prevent the soil being washed down into the valley by the rain floods, and were fresh soil carried up from the hollows, where it must lie fathoms deep, magnificent

A TERRACED SLOPE.

crops would very soon be produced. It is well known also how soon the moisture of the climate would be affected by the restoration of the orchards.

There was always one redeeming feature of the road, and that was "the glory of the grass." The flowers gave

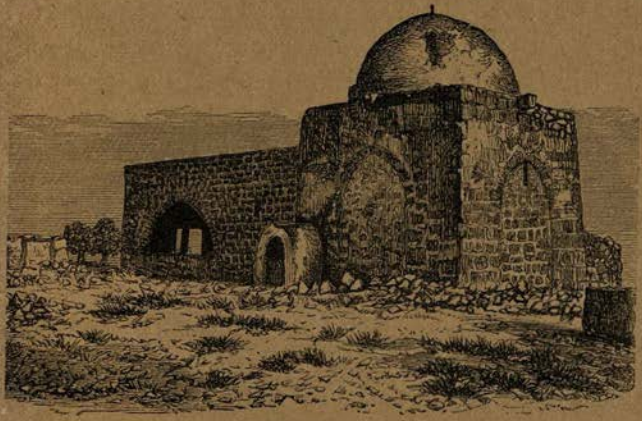
colour and life to the path wherever they could grow. We came upon a large land tortoise crawling among them, the only specimen we met with in Palestine.

Rachel's Tomb was to me very touching. It was just where it should have been.—"They journeyed from Bethel, and there was but a little way to come to Ephrah. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrah, which is in Bethlehem." That place of burial is an undying witness to the oneness of our human hearts and of our domestic sorrows from the beginning of the world. It is this felt unity of our race in soul and spirit, in spite of some differences in the body, whether it be in the shape of the foot or of the skull, which strengthens our faith in the possibility of eternal fellowship among all kindreds and nations and tongues. To Rachel, with her dying breath naming her boy "the child of sorrow," every parent's heart will respond through all time.

We passed Bethlehem, but did not visit it until our return from Hebron. The "Pools of Solomon" are three in number. The largest is 580 feet in length and 236 feet in breadth. The smallest is 380 feet by 207 feet. The depth is from 25 to 50 feet. They are interesting as being unquestionably grand old "water-works," worthy of a highly civilised age, and such as all the Turks put together would never think of designing or executing now-a-days. And the water is not surpassed. The road during a part of the way is alongside the clay pipe which conveys the water to Bethlehem, as it did formerly to Jerusalem; and where there happens to be a break the

fresh clear stream is seen gushing along as it did before the "works" were repaired by Pontius Pilate.

Below the Pools is the Valley of Urtas, which, being watered by them and other springs, looks like an emerald-green river, of about two miles in length, and from 10 to 300 yards in breadth, flowing between high banks of barren limestone hills, and winding round their



RACHEL'S TOMB.

jutting promontories. Here were once the Gardens of Solomon, and no doubt these hills, now so bare, were once clothed with the trees and plants about which he "spake."

It was probably with reference to his labours in this spot that he said:—"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens

and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruit: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees."

And here an attempt is being made to introduce model gardens, where converted Jews may support themselves by their own industry, instead of trusting to the charity which they are necessarily thrown upon when "put out of the synagogue."

About two miles from Hebron we turned off to the left, to visit the ruins of an old church built by Constantine round the stump of a terebinth tree, which, according to tradition, was Abraham's oak, and consequently marked the spot where he pitched his tent on the plain of Mamre, or "of the oak."

The old stump had become an object of superstition, and attracted crowds; so the Emperor Constantine, to counteract this, and to turn the spot to good account, built a great basilica around it. We found several feet of the walls of the church remaining, and we could easily trace the whole. Three tiers of stone remain at one side, some of the stones being upwards of fourteen feet in length.

"If Abraham," remarked one of the party, "had his tent near the oak, depend upon it he had a well also. Let us get inside the ruins and search." There we found—as no doubt other travellers have done, when they sought for it—a deep well, encased with stone, and having its edges deeply cut by the ropes which were wont to hoist the water-buckets, or skins.

I have not the slightest doubt that this was the true Mamre, and that it was close to this well that the wondrous interview between Abraham and those sent to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, recorded in Genesis, took place. The scenery of the wady is dull and uninteresting in the extreme. But such an event as this sheds around

ABRAHAM'S OAK.

it much of that holy light which more or less invests all Palestine. From the lower hills to the east the smoke from the doomed cities could be easily seen, although the Dead Sea itself lies too low to be visible.

Hebron is entered by a road which winds between the walls that enclose the vineyards and orchards of Eshcol,

the grapes of which are still famous. I have been informed by one who had, he said, made the experiment, that even now the best way of carrying a large cluster of the grapes of Eshcol is over a long pole, as was done by the "spies,"—not on account of their weight, but from the long tendrils on which they grow giving a cluster a greater length than is found in the same number of grapes grown elsewhere.

Eshcol is snugly nestled amidst bare, tame, limestone hills, with numerous olive groves clothing their lower spurs and the valleys between them. There is no "hotel" in the city, but travellers who do not bring their tents can be accommodated at the old Lazaretto, or, as we were, in a private dwelling.

The houses are poverty-stricken. The Jewish inhabitants wear dressing-gowns with girdles, and sugar-loaf hats, curl their hair in tiny ringlets, and have soft white faces, giving one the impression of great effeminacy.

Our host was a Jew. His house was situated and arranged in a way which at once suggested the idea of liability to attack, and of the necessity of providing for defence. We first passed from the street by a narrow passage, which one broad-shouldered man might almost have filled up with his own person; then along narrow tortuous windings, which could be easily defended by a few against many. Three or four steps led up to the narrow door of the house, which was situated in the deep recesses of alleys and back courts.

The entrance-hall was a sleeping apartment with divans on each side; from it a second series of steps and another narrow door led to the kitchen. From this a stair ascended to the flat roof. On the left, a few steps led from the kitchen to a small room, round which we found our couches spread. The house thus possessed a succession of strongholds before the roof was reached, which was itself a citadel. The windows of our room had frames and shutters, but no glass, which afforded us at least ample ventilation. We provided of course our own food. The night was tolerably cool, and so, in despite of the howlings of jackals without, and the attacks of insects common to Jew and Gentile within, we slept, as usual, profoundly.

There is certainly no town in Palestine which is so associated with early patriarchal history as Hebron. It has other associations no doubt, stirring and curious enough. For example, those connected with its early inhabitants, the strange race of giants who struck terror into the minds of the unbelieving spies; and with those men of faith, Caleb and Joshua; as well as with David, who reigned here for seven years, during which he probably composed some of his immortal Psalms. A present existing memento here of David is the great pool—130 feet square by 50 deep—where he hanged the assassins of Ishbosheth (2 Sam. iv. 4—12). There is another pool as ancient, but not so large. Still the memories of the patriarchs predominate, as this was at once their home, if home they had anywhere, and their place of burial.

The oak, or terebinth tree, which is now pointed out as Abraham's oak, is indeed a noble tree, twenty-four feet in circumference, with stately branches sweeping ninety feet round its stem. But it was planted many a century after the patriarchs were gathered to their fathers.

The one spot connected with these ancient fathers which is unquestionably authentic is the cave of Machpelah, now covered by the famous mosque. The Prince of Wales, accompanied by Dean Stanley and other members of his suite, were the first Christian travellers who were permitted to enter it for centuries. The cave itself in which their mummies are laid is beneath the floor of the Mosque, and, so far as is yet known, has no entrance except by a small hole in the floor, which opens into darkness.

In that mysterious cave no doubt Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lie. What a spot of matchless interest! There is no authentic tomb on earth like it. Nearly 4,000 years ago, when earth was young and history just beginning, here were buried persons with whose lives and characters we are still familiar, whose names God has deigned to associate with his own, as the "God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob;" and whom Jesus has consecrated as guests at the great marriage supper of the Lamb. It is strange indeed for a Christian to be on the spot where that one lies in whose seed all the families of earth have been blessed, and who is the father of all who believe!

This is the only spot on earth which attracts to it all who possess the one creed, "I believe in God." The

Moslem guards this place as dear and holy. The Jew from every land draws near to it with reverence and love, and his kisses have left an impress on its stones. Christians of every kindred, and tongue, and creed, visit the spot with a reverence equally affectionate. And who lies here? A great king or conqueror? a man famous for his genius or his learning? No, but an old shepherd who pitched his tent 4,000 years ago among these hills, a stranger and a pilgrim in the land, and who was known only as *el-Khalil*, "The Friend." By that blessed name Abraham was known while he lived; by that name he is remembered where he lies buried; and by that name the city is called after him. And it is when all men through faith become with him friends of God, that all shall be blessed along with "faithful Abraham."

SOUTH FROM JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER XVI.

BETHLEHEM.

OF all the places in Southern Palestine associated with Scripture history, Bethlehem is on the whole the most picturesque.

The three convents attached to the Church of the Nativity, which crown the summit and the ridge on which the village is built, wear the massive and dignified look of an old mediæval fortress. The terraces, which, like gigantic stairs, descend to the lower valleys and the small alluvial plains and cornfields, have a fine bold sweep, and are rich in olives and fruit trees, the shade and verdure of which relieve the eye from the dazzling glare of the white limestone rocks and soil.

The hills around are higher, and more varied than those which border the upper plateau, the cone of Jebel Fureidis

BETHLEHEM.

breaking their otherwise tame outline, and the mountain ridge of Moab rising with its noble wall against the eastern horizon.

The "sacred localities" of Bethlehem are all seen under one roof. One can here pace along the oldest existing Christian church in the world. It was repaired by King Edward IV. of England; Baldwin was crowned in it: and it was built centuries before by the mother of the first Christian emperor. It is a noble structure, though it has but scanty ecclesiastical furnishings. In spite, therefore, of its roof of English oak, and its grand rows of marble pillars, it looks cold, bare, and uncared for.

Beneath this old church, and reached by a number of steps cut out of the living rock, is the cave of the Nativity. Here, surrounded by the usual amount of tinsel and tawdry ornament, lamps, altars, and incense, is a hollow recess, in which it is alleged the Saviour was born.

It is possible that this tradition, which can unquestionably be traced to a very early period, probably the second century, is authentic. The fact of cattle being kept in caves or grottoes, affording easy access and excellent shelter, is sufficiently common even now in Palestine, to warrant us in admitting that this cave may have been used as a stable. But in spite of all probabilities in its favour, I could not associate the Incarnation and Nativity with what the eye saw here. The spectacle did not help my faith, or even harmonise with it, as did those scenes in nature, associated with the life of Jesus, which the

priest has not yet attempted to improve. Bethlehem itself—its lovely hills, its very air, with the blue sky over all, impressed me infinitely more.

But it is not, of course, what one *sees* in Bethlehem which imparts to it such overwhelming interest. It is the one fact of all facts, the secret of the world's existence and of its whole history—the Incarnation. Other events indeed are necessarily suggested while sitting under the shade of its old olives, gazing in silent meditation on the surrounding landscape. From these mountains of Moab came Ruth and Naomi. One of those fields, stretching like a green landing-place at the foot of the broad stairs of cultivated terraces, was the scene of that exquisite idyll of Ruth gleaning "amidst the alien corn," which sanctifies common life, shedding a glory over every field of reapers, like that which rests over the lilies of the field, and is greater far than any which Solomon ever knew. David himself, first as the shepherd boy, and then as the brave chief, seemed again

> "To walk in glory and in joy,
> Following his *sheep* along the mountain side."

But these and other memories are lost in the story of David's son, born in Bethlehem, "the least of the thousands of Judah."

The imagination gets bewildered in attempting to realise the facts connected with the Incarnation. They fill the heavens above and the earth below with their glory. We instinctively look up to the sky and then to the hills, and

THE ANGEL AND THE SHEPHERDS.

dream of the night when the Angel of the Lord announced the birth of Jesus to the humble shepherds somewhere hereabout. On that ridge? on those knolls? in that mountain recess? In vain we ask!

What we do know is, that as the Aurora flashes across the midnight of the North, so there once gleamed a heavenly host athwart this quiet sky, and filled it with the *Gloria in excelsis* which gives the only true promise of the world's redemption from evil, and restoration to God's immortal kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. We can never weary of the simple and sublime narrative:—"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

As we read of these things we ask with surprise, Did they actually happen here? Is this Bethlehem?

A remarkable contrast is suggested at Bethlehem between the strength of man and "the weakness of God." The first attempt to destroy Christianity in the person of Christ was here made by King Herod, surnamed the Great. He was the type of irresistible human power, while the young child was the type of unresisting human weakness. But now Herod lies on the summit of Jebel Fureidis, or the Frank Mountain, which, like a huge monumental tumulus, towers above Bethlehem as if raised "in memoriam" of the massacre of the innocents; while the Child!—but who can describe what he has since become on earth and in heaven!

Before bidding farewell to Bethlehem and its sacred associations, I may describe a commonplace incident which befel us on our way from Hebron, as illustrative of the supposed danger to which travellers are subjected.

Mr. M——, one of Colonel M——'s party, was riding along with me. We were far in the rear of the cavalcade, which, by the way, included our brave guard. Having abundance of time, we were leisurely chatting, and our steeds as leisurely walking, when all at once we saw six Arab-looking horsemen galloping towards us. They suddenly dismounted, and forthwith began to load their long guns.

"Hollo! what does this mean!" one of us exclaimed.

Various suggestions were hazarded, the most unpleasant, but most probable, being that an attack was

about to be made on our baggage, which was at this time behind us, and out of sight.

At once the unknown horsemen charged right down upon us, we of course disdaining to show any signs of fear or flight, but gallantly preparing our pistols, notwithstanding our being minus both powder and shot. Two of the troopers dismounted and demanded *backsheesh* from me. I replied by shaking my head, and begging, with a look of poverty and an outstretched hand, the same favour from them. Their next demand was for powder—*barud*, I think, was the word. In the meantime I had wound up my musical snuff-box, and invited the two highwaymen, as I understood them, to receive more peaceful ideas by permitting me to lay the box on their heads. The usual results followed. There were the delighted expressions of "Tayēeb! tayēeb!"—with the invariable exhibition of beautiful ivory teeth, framed in a most pleasant smile. And so we were allowed to depart in peace.

We afterwards learned that the fierce robbers who thus spared our purses and our lives were—a detachment of Turkish police!

We returned from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. Is not that one day's ride from Hebron to Jerusalem, *viâ* Bethlehem, enough to reward any traveller from England to Palestine, even though he should not take another?

THROUGH CENTRAL PALESTINE.

THROUGH CENTRAL PALESTINE.

CHAPTER XVII.

BY JACOB'S WELL.

LEAVING Jerusalem by the Damascus Gate, we soon reached the low ridge of Scopus, whence we turned our horses' heads to take a last view of "the city of the Great King."

We gazed on the now familiar domes and minarets, the gentle swell of the Mount of Olives rising above them like the roll of a great sea wave. We felt as if taking our last look of a dead parent. It was difficult to tear ourselves away, feeling that we should, in all probability, see the beloved object no more. Yet there came undefined and impalpable thoughts of a resurrection—gleams of a light beyond the grave—dim visions of a new Jerusalem better than the old—thoughts, not shaped into beliefs, of our living to see the land and its city yet

connected with some evolution in the future history of the Church. But we had to depart. So at last, with one intense gaze which I doubt not ended in the case of us all in heartfelt thanksgiving for having been permitted to see the city whose "very dust is dear," we resumed our journey, to visit other scenes linked with the holy men of old and the holy Son of God.

The road to the north has little interest for the eye, until we get into the mountains of Ephraim. It runs along the flat watershed of the country, the valleys descending from it towards the Jordan on the east, and the maritime plain on the west. Our day's journey led us by Neby Samwil Gibeah of Saul on to Bireh, or Beeroth, where, according to tradition, the parents of Jesus first missed their boy, as the small caravan gathered together for rest. Then passing Orphah, or Ephraim, to which our Lord retired after the raising of Lazarus, we reached Bethel, but in that illustrious spot saw nothing with the outer eye save stones of confusion and emptiness. Huge limestone blocks washed white with the rains, without any appearance of verdure among them, cover the hill-tops. Yet here, probably where the wretched cluster of huts now stand, with the ruined tower rising among them, was once the Sanctuary of God; and this was the scene of the memorable vision afforded to Jacob.

Soon after passing Bethel we entered the mountains of Ephraim. The whole character of the landscape suddenly changed. For the first time on our

journey there was scenery worth looking at for its own sake.

The road, however, was the worst we had yet seen, if indeed the bed of a torrent can be called a road. It was most difficult for our horses to keep their footing, as they cautiously felt their way through loose stones and over muddy holes concealed by the stream. The pass through which we rode was one which few armies would attempt to force if bravely defended. It terminated to the north in a green flat spot beneath a low wall of rocks, called with great propriety "The Robbers' Fountain," or Ain-el-Hamareyeh, and which all travellers avoid after sunset.

So we left the Robbers' Fountain with that prudence which is at once moral and agreeable, and reached our tents on the high grounds of Sinjil, after an easy and pleasant ride of seven or eight hours. As usual after ablutions and dinner, we rejoiced in the stars, for the weather was splendid; and we put a stop for a time to the incessant jabber of the Arabs, who came in crowds from the neighbouring village, by indulging them with music from our inexhaustible box, instead of *backsheesh* from our far from inexhaustible purse.

Early next day, we sighted Shiloh to the east, but did not ride up to it, though it was only half an hour off our route. It is a round low hill at the end of a plain, and leaning on a more elevated range above it. During many a long year the tribes went up to the ark at Shiloh. But now all is silence, desolation, and barrenness, with

nothing to be seen, yet much to be learned and remembered.

As we advanced on our journey, the valleys expanded into broader plains, and the paths became better; the whole country of Ephraim evidencing a fertility and agricultural richness which cannot be found in the rocky fastnesses of Palestine.

The richest and most magnificent expanse of cultivated soil we saw on this journey was the plain of Mukhra, which extends for about seven miles. It suddenly burst on our view from the summit of a high ridge over which our road passed. The promontories of Gerizim and Ebal plunge their rocky headlands into it from the west, while a range of low hills separates it from the descent towards the Jordan on the east. We skirted this plain, until we sat down under the shadow of Gerizim, to read and to meditate, as pilgrims have done for centuries, at Jacob's Well.

There has never been a doubt entertained by the most sceptical or critical traveller regarding the identity of this well. Beyond all question it is the one at which our Saviour rested as He journeyed along the route which travellers generally follow from Jerusalem to Galilee. Every feature of the landscape starts into life as we read the narrative of His memorable conversation with the woman of Samaria:—the plain of cornfields which were then as now whitening to the harvest; the mountain rising above, on which the Samaritan temple was built; the neighbouring town of Shechem; the Samaritans

worshipping, as they still do, towards "this mountain," and there only;—all are evidence of its truth, apart from the common and unbroken tradition.

The well is not what we understand by that name. It is not a spring of water bubbling up from the earth, nor is it reached by an excavation. It is a shaft cut in the living rock, about nine feet in diameter, and now upwards of seventy feet deep. As an immense quantity of rubbish has fallen into it, the original depth must have been much greater, probably twice what it is now. It was therefore intended by its first engineer as a reservoir, rather than as a means of reaching a spring.

Then again, if any wall, as some suppose, once surrounded its mouth, on which the traveller could rest, it is now gone. The mouth is funnel shaped, and its sides are formed by the rubbish of old buildings, a church having once been erected over it.

We can descend this funnel, and enter a cave, as it were, a few feet below the surface, which is the remains of a small dome that once covered the mouth. Descending a few feet we perceive in the floor an aperture partly covered by a flat stone, and leaving a sufficient space through which we can look into darkness. We sent a plumb-line down into the water—with which the well certainly seemed to be abundantly supplied at the time of our visit.

Many have been puzzled to account for Jacob's having dug such a well here, when the whole valley of Shechem, only a quarter of an hour's walk off, is more

musical with streams than any other in Palestine. But *some one* dug the well,—and who more likely than Jacob, not only to have on his own property what was in his time more valuable than a private coal mine would be to us; but also for the moral purpose of keeping his family and dependants as separate as possible from the depraved Shechemites?

Why the woman of Samaria should have come here to draw water, so far away from the valley and its many springs, is a question which may be more difficult to answer. I cannot think it could have been because of the superior quality of the water, for no cistern could afford a purer, cooler, or better quality than that which gushes everywhere along the Valley of Nablous.

It seems to me that her motive was a superstitious one—a motive pertaining to her conscience. It was to her "a holy well," such as are frequented in Ireland as places of Roman Catholic devotion, or rather superstition. She was restless, dissatisfied, and unhappy; burdened with a sense of wrongdoing, and thirsting after what she had never found. Thus her whole state of mind in coming here to draw water, and her attempt to assuage the thirst of her spirit for peace, would be an unconscious preparation for her reception of the Saviour's teaching, which was so suited to reveal her plague, and also to heal her of it.

This well is indeed a holy spot. One is glad that the contending ecclesiastical parties in the land have built their churches on places which have little historical value,

and that Providence has preserved untouched, and open to the eye of heaven, such spots as that on the Mount of Olives "over against the Temple," and, above all, Jacob's Well. It is now said, however, that the Greek Church have purchased it, as the site of a church, for 70,000 piastres. Universal Christendom, to which it belongs, should protest against such "pious" profanation.

The two parallel ridges of Mount Gerizim and Ebal, abruptly terminate in a dead flat plain. The Valley of Nablous, the ancient Shechem, leads to the plain as a narrow strait to an inland sea. A mile and a-half up this valley lies the town, nestled amidst an exuberance of foliage—vines, figs, pomegranates, oranges, and every fruitful tree, all growing beside inexhaustible streams of living water. Nothing in Palestine surpasses the picturesqueness of this spot when looked at from any of the surrounding heights. In the midst of the white, bare, hot hills and plains, it stands alone in its glory of fruit and verdure, of running brooks and singing birds. Should any one penetrate these groves, however, he would find little of the art which helps Nature to produce that ideal of the beautiful after which she struggles. The grass grows wild, the ground is rough, while tangled shrubs and branches mingle with the trees as in a long-neglected garden.

It was here, too, that another event took place full of sacred and dramatic interest—the burial of Joseph.

Nearly five hundred years before the assembling of the people by Joshua, Joseph as a young shepherd lad,

passed through this plain in search of his brethren. What a life was his! and his influence did not end with his death, for though dead he was yet a silent but most impressive witness to the people of faith in God and in His promises.

How strange a sight was that body embalmed for centuries, carried through the wilderness for forty years with the ark of God, and finally buried by that vast assemblage, each one a blood relation, in the land of promise, and in the very field purchased by his father! What memories must have gathered round his grave! How undying is the influence of faith, hope, and love!

This is what we are told of that remarkable funeral: "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."

There is no reason to doubt that the tomb shown is really Joseph's. It remains, like that of his ancestors at Hebron, to witness again, it may be, in later ages more even than now, to the truth of Bible history.

But we must not forget the modern Samaritans, whose existence invests Nablous with great interest. We pause and wonder as we realise the fact of a community, consisting of only about 150 souls, or forty families, living for nearly 3,000 years separate from all other races on earth, with their own Pentateuch, ritual, sacrifices, and

THE VALLEY OF NABLOUS, ANCIENT SHECHEM.

worship, and surviving all the changes and revolutions of Palestine and of the world.

Here they are still, worshipping towards Mount Gerizim, having no fellowship with the Jews, keeping all the great festivals prescribed by Moses, and eating their Passover "on this mountain," the oldest spot for the worship of Jehovah on the face of the earth! Such a fact stands alone.

This undying dogmatism puzzles historians; this race, so noble-looking, yet marrying only in their own small community, puzzles ethnographers, and creates in all feelings of wonder such as one might experience if in some distant land he came upon a breed of Mammoths, or Pterodactyles, which everywhere else were known only as fossils. To meet them here especially, at Jacob's Well, and under the same delusions as when Christ first preached to them and converted many of them, but adds to the wonder of a spectacle familiar to every traveller in Palestine.

We ascended Gerizim. It is a rather tough bit of climbing. I assigned this alpine occupation to my horse, and yet suffered sufficiently, after a day's ride, to sympathise with his patient but painful labours.

There is much to interest one on the summit:—the scattered ruins; the massive remains of what some allege to have been the old Samaritan Temple, but what others say, with I think greater probability, was a Roman fort. Then there is the unquestionable site of an old place of sacrifice; and the more questionable twelve stones

which Joshua brought from the Jordan, but which it is now difficult even to number or to distinguish from the underlying strata. There is also the trough where "the paschal lamb" is yet roasted, some of whose burnt bones I gathered.

We of course visited the famous Samaritan synagogue. Our approach to it seemed to us at the time to be by an exceptional way, though it is possibly the ordinary road to this ancient sanctuary. I cannot recall each turn and winding; but I had a confused impression of an endless succession of narrow lanes, low vaulted passages, and almost pitch-dark cavernous tunnels, through which we were led, until we reached a steep narrow stair leading to the roof of a house, from which we passed along to a court with an orange-tree growing in it, and thence into the small vaulted synagogue, the only place of worship of this ancient Church in the whole world. In all this we recognised precautions against sudden attacks, such as we had noticed in entering our lodgings at Hebron.

The Samaritans professed to show us their old and famous copy of the Pentateuch. This we knew was a pious fraud, but we did not take the trouble to contradict them, as a sight of the real one can only be obtained with great difficulty, and would have simply gratified a vain curiosity in us. The old roll is of very high, but as yet unknown antiquity. Its possessors allege that it was written by the great-grandson of Aaron.

The morning was glorious when we rode out of Nablous. A luxurious atmosphere hung over the gardens,

THE OLIVE TREE.

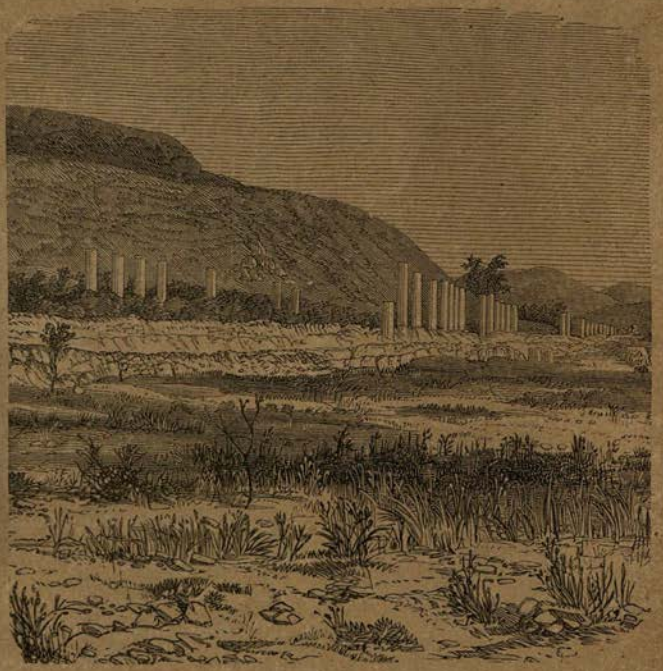
and subdued the sharp statuesque lines of the hills. A Turkish regiment, with strings of camels, was winding through the valley,—their band playing its wild music, and giving to the whole scene a true touch of Eastern life and barbaric power. We were told that they were going away to keep in order (!) some restless and tax-hating tribes to the south of Hebron.

The ride from Nablous to Samaria is along a good bridle-path, with pleasant scenery all the way, including a view of the upper part of the valley of Nablous, rich, as its lower portion, in abundance of water and fruit and flowers. We passed many picturesque village strongholds, like eagles' or rather vultures' nests, built on commanding summits, and having fertile valleys and groves of olives at their feet.

No old city in Palestine had a site so striking, so regal-looking, as the "hill of Samaria." It is a shapely hill, rising at the end of a fine valley, and moulded into a fitting platform for a great temple. On all sides it is circled by noble terraces, which must have once borne splendid wreaths of vines and olives, furnishing wine and oil in abundance to its luxurious inhabitants.

The summit of the hill is flat, and was evidently levelled for the site of the public buildings which occupied it from the days of Baal and Ahab to those of Augustus and Herod. Fifteen columns rear their solitary heads on this flat, though it is uncertain to what building they belonged, or for what object they and their now fallen brethren were reared.

It is when standing on this level that we can appreciate Omri's taste in making Samaria the site of his capital. The surrounding hills, plains, and valleys teem with every product of the soil.



REMAINS OF COLONNADE.

Here there are very striking remains of a magnificent colonnade, composed of two ranges of pillars about 50 feet apart, and which—it is conjectured from the length of the terrace on which the sixty pillars yet stand—

must have extended for about 3,000 feet. It was probably the work of Herod, who adorned Sebaste.

There are also the ruins of a noble old church dedicated to St. John the Baptist. Few things are more sad than such ruins in Palestine, as they evidence a time when Christianity was so strong, and so hopeful of continued strength, that it built churches which put to shame most of those reared in later and richer times.

Close to the church is an old reservoir, which may have been the pool in which Ahab washed his bloody chariot. But all Samaria is ruins, nothing but ruins; and never were words more true than those which we read aloud here:—"Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof."

THROUGH CENTRAL PALESTINE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FROM THE TOWER OF JEZREEL.

AFTER leaving Samaria we passed, at some distance to the left, a gently swelling hill rising out of the plain, called *Tell Dothain*. Strange that the name of *Dothan* should still remain attached to this spot!

Most willingly should we have turned aside for an hour to visit the place where that story of Joseph and his brethren began to unfold itself, which for ages has been read with breathless interest by the young child and the aged saint, and where also that wondrous scene occurred for the account of which I refer my readers to 2 Kings vi. 8—23. But we were prevented by that want so common in a world where men's lives are short—the want of time.

It is worth noticing, however, that the caravans from Gilead to Egypt still enter the hill country at Dothan, passing thence to the maritime plain by Gaza. I have never heard that the pit into which Joseph was let down has been discovered. But it is only a few years since the locality was identified; and no doubt our ignorance of it, and of many spots associated with caves, rocks, and other unchanged features of the country, would to a large extent be dispelled, if such a society as that which has been formed for the exploration of Palestine were liberally encouraged.

Our next halt was at *Jenin* (the ancient Engannim of Joshua xxi. 29), and there, on a grassy field, with a sparkling stream of water rushing past, we pitched our tents. Unseen frogs, more numerous than could be accommodated in the grand orchestra of the Crystal Palace, croaked a concert all night long.

The village of Jenin rose above us; but we did not visit the dishonest and disorderly settlement, having been advised to give it what sailors call "a wide berth."

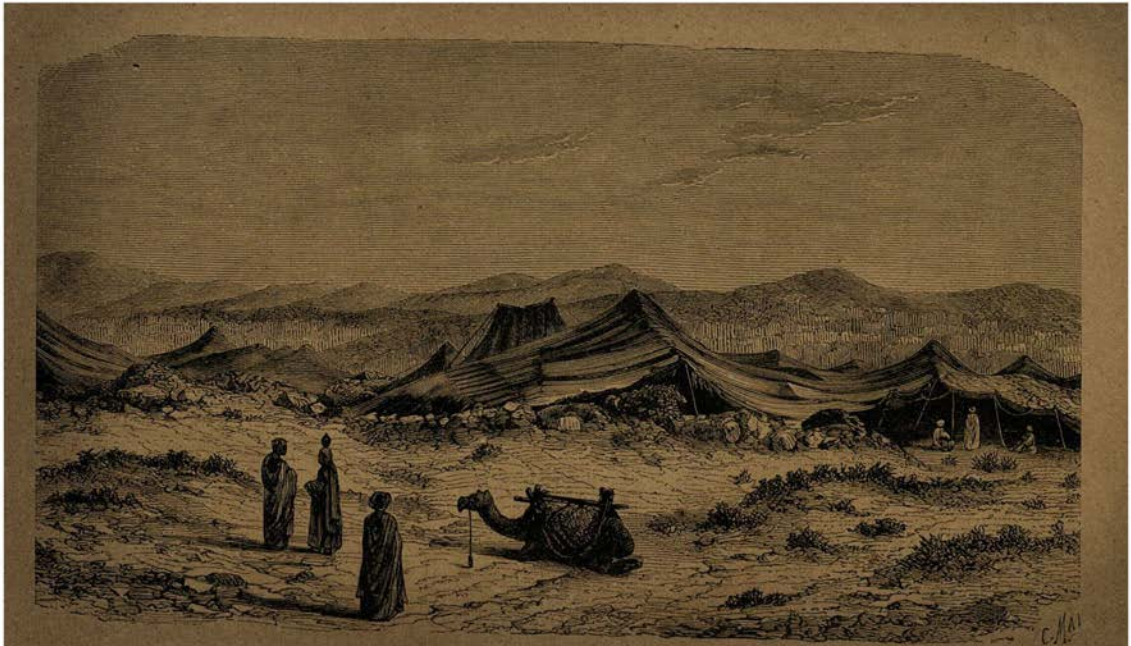
We were a strong party, and showed our sense of security by adding to the brilliancy of the moon the light of a few Roman candles, whose loud reports and starry rays impressed the Arabs with some respect for our power. So at least we fondly believed although it was as well that they did not put our strength to the proof.

Jenin is on the edge of the great plain of Esdraelon

which we had to cross on our way to Nazareth. What a strange "Blue Book" of Turkish rule is this same plain of Esdraelon! It is one of the most fertile in the world. It might present such a scene of peasant prosperity, comfort, and happiness as could not be surpassed on earth. But instead of this it is a rough uninhabited common, and, but for the bounty of Nature—which, with never failing patience and charity, returns an hundredfold whatever is here committed to the soil—it would be a dreary wilderness.

Unfortunately there is beyond the Jordan a numerous and wide-spread race of scoundrels, who live in tents, gallop about on fine horses, brandish spears, fire long guns, tell lies, rob their neighbours, and possess no virtue under heaven that is not serviceable to their greedy pockets or hungry stomachs. Romance they have none, unless it be the romance of plunder. Their "Arabian Nights" are but nights of robbery. The Turkish Government, or even a London "Limited" Company possessing ordinary sense and enterprise, might, with a dozen rifled cannon placed in commanding positions, keep these Ishmaelites at bay, and defy them to steal west of the Jordan.

But as things are now managed, the Bedouin make a raid as a matter of amusement or profit. They swarm, like locusts, from the Hauran, cover the great plain, pitch their black tents, feed their camels, gallop their horses, reap the crops, shoot the peasants, and then return to their lairs beyond the Jordan, to crunch their



A BEDOUIN CAMP.

marrow-bones at leisure, with none to molest them or make them afraid.

Our worthy dragoman, Hadji Ali, expressed anxiety to see us safely across the Pirate Gulf. Begging for my pistol, he loaded it, and gallantly went ahead as guard and scout.

We pushed on from Jenin towards Jezreel, which is about seven miles to the north. On or near the spot where Ahab's Palace is likely to have stood, is an ancient tower, built I know not when, or by whom. We ascended to its upper story, and there, through three windows, opening to the east, west, and north, obtained excellent views of all the interesting portions of the surrounding landscape.

Beneath us lay the famous plain—a rolling sea of verdure, yet lonely looking, and without inhabitants. We saw no villages or huts dotting its surface, not even a solitary horseman, but only troops of gazelles galloping away into the distance, and some birds of prey, apparently vultures, wheeling in the sky, and doubtless looking out for work from their masters the Bedouin. The tower of Jezreel is another of those points of view which command a number of famous historical places, the sight of which, with their relative positions, gives great clearness and vividness to the Bible narratives.

Standing on the tower, we see, through the window looking northward, three or four miles off, the range of the Little Hermon, with the village of Shunem on one of

its slopes. Through the eastern window the view is filled up by the rolling ridge of Gilboa. The western window opens to the plain vanishing in the distance with the long ridge of Carmel, and other hills bounding it to the south, and the hills of Galilee to the north. With map and Bible in hand, let us look through these open windows, and see how much of the past is recalled and revivified by even this one view.

Through the opening to the north, we see Shunem, where dwelt the good Shunamite, whose little humbly-furnished chamber in the wall welcomed the great prophet "who oft passed by" that way, and who must therefore have been familiar with every object which now meets our gaze, as well as with many others that have passed away. We see at a glance how the afflicted mother, with the thoughts of her dead child and of "the man of God" in her heart, would cross the plain to the range of Carmel, ten or twelve miles off. We also see how from its summit the Prophet would see her riding over the plain, and how he would have accompanied her back again.

And Shunem, with Gilboa (seen out of the eastern window), recall two great battles familiar to us:—the battle of Gideon with the hordes of the Midianites who swarmed along the sides of Hermon, and the battle of Saul with the Philistines who occupied the same position.

From Gilboa, Gideon with his selected army descended. Immediately beneath it we can see the fountain—gleam-

ing like burnished silver in the sun's rays—where doubtless Gideon had separated the rash and the cowardly from his army. Descending at night with his select band from these rocky heights, he must have passed the narrow valley which lay between him and Shunem. Then with three hundred lights suddenly revealed and gleaming on every side, as if belonging to a great army, and with the piercing war-cry of "The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" he fell like a lightning-stroke on the sleeping and careless host, who, seized by a panic, fled in terror before the pursuing warriors, down the steep descent to the fords of the Jordan.

On the same place, too, the host of the Philistines, which made Saul sore afraid, pitched their tents on the night before they attacked the king and his son on Gilboa. One sees how Saul must have then travelled to En-dor. It lies two hours off on the other side of Hermon. He must have gone round the right flank of the enemy, crossing the shoulder of the hill to reach it. One of the most dreary spectacles of human misery was that journey to the foul den of the witch of En-dor!

We see the tall form, bent like a pine-tree beneath the midnight storm, but every inch a king in spite of the disguise, enter the cave in darkness and bow down before the deceiving hag. How touching his longing to meet Samuel, who had known and loved him in his better days; and his craving desire, however perverted, to obtain in his loneliness the sympathy of any spirit,

whether alive or dead. And when he sees, or rather believes that the wicked impostor sees, the form of his old friend, what a wail rises from his broken heart:—"I am sore distressed! The Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me by dreams no more!" The only parallel to it is the picture given by Shakespeare of Richard the Third the night before he was slain:—

> "I shall despair:—there is no creature loves me;
> And if I die, no soul shall pity me."

But Saul was loved by one whom his proud and eager ambition dragged down with himself on the bloody battle-field; and he was pitied by one who had ever reverenced his kingly head, and had dispelled the brooding darkness from his soul by the cunning minstrelsy of the harp. And the sweet singer of Israel has for ever invested those sterile hills of Gilboa with a charm, by his incomparable lament for Saul and Jonathan,—by the womanly love which it breathes for his old friend, and the chivalrous generosity, the godlike charity, which it pours out in tears over his old enemy:—"Saul and Jonathan were pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided!"

As if to make the scene of that battle-field still more complete, the top of the hill of Beth-shaan (now called Beisan) rises, like Dumbarton rock, close under the hill of Gilboa, and overhangs the valley of the Jordan. To the gates of its citadel the bodies of Saul and his three

sons were fastened, until removed by the brave men of Jabesh-gilead,* from the opposite side of the Jordan, who thus testified their remembrance of the time when Saul had delivered them, thirty years before, from the Amorites.†

But the interest and teaching of this old battle-plain are not yet exhausted. As we look out of the opposite window, towards the south and west, we see to the left a long line of low hills which here and there send points into the plain, with retiring bays and valleys between, and end at the smooth ridge of Mount Carmel. On the shore of one of those green bays, seven or eight miles off, we see Taanach, and four miles or so beyond, Megiddo, past which "the waters of Megiddo" flow to join the Kishon.

Now it was from Tabor, which is concealed from us by the ridge of the Little Hermon, that Barak, at the instigation of Deborah, marched about twelve miles across the plain from the north, and amidst a storm of wind and rain attacked the chariots of Sisera in the marshes of the Kishon, and gained that famous victory which freed Israel from the terrible thraldom in which they had been held by the heathen Canaanites.

Again we notice from the same window, a few miles off in the plain, what looks like a ruin. It is El Fuleh, the remains of an old Crusaders' fortress, and famous as the scene of the "battle of Mount Tabour," where a French force of 3,000 men under Kleber, resisted in square, for

* 1 Sam. xxxi. 11. † 1 Sam. xi. 3, 4.

six hours, a Turkish army of 30,000, half cavalry and half infantry. Then they were joined by Napoleon with fresh troops, and gained the battle.

It is strange indeed to have thus connected in the same place, battles fought by Barak, Gideon, Saul, and Napoleon! It is probably from the fact of this place having been of old the great battle-field of Palestine, that in the book of Revelation it is made the symbol of the mysterious conflict called "the battle of Armageddon" or "the city of Megiddo."

And there are other associations still suggested by the landscape. The most tragic and dramatic histories in the Old Testament are recalled by the place we stand on, and by Carmel in the distance.

On that height beyond Megiddo, and on a spot which with highest probability can be identified, the great Elijah met the prophets of Baal in a terrible conflict, God himself testifying to His faithful servant, who apparently was a solitary witness for His being and character. From that spot, twelve miles off, the prophet, borne up by an ecstatic fervour at such a crisis in his own life and in the life of the nation, ran, amidst the storm of wind and rain, before the chariot of Ahab to this Jezreel:—"It came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."

And to this Jezreel the same Elijah, after having been

threatened by the murderess Jezebel, returned from his mysterious and awful journey through the wilderness to Horeb. Weak and fearful as a man, but strong in God, he came to slay Ahab and Jezebel with the sword of his mouth for the murder of poor Naboth. "And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."

All these incidents are recalled from the tower of Jezreel as we gaze on the several places where they occurred. It restores them all with as much vividness as the field of Waterloo recalls the events of that great battle. But Nature has resumed her quiet reign over the hill of Jezreel. All is silent and desolate now; Baal and his worshippers have passed away, and so have the calves of Bethel and of Dan.

THROUGH CENTRAL PALESTINE.

CHAPTER XIX.

NAIN AND NAZARETH.

WE left Jezreel, crossed the plain, and passed through Shunem. There are no "great ladies" there now, as it is a very squalid village; nor did its inhabitants appear to be descendants of any good Shunamites, male or female, for we were pelted with stones when passing through. Fortunately, however, the stones were neither very large nor very near, serving only to make us quicken our pace, and to make Hadji scold in fierce guttural Arabic, with pistol in hand.

The attack was made by a number of boys, from the heights, and was doubtless prompted by the universal love of mischief peculiar to the young portion of our race, rather than by any hatred of Nazarenes peculiar to the place.

We crossed Hermon, and found ourselves in a small decayed village on the edge of another bay of Esdraelon, which rolls between the hills of Galilee and Hermon to the north.

Hadji Ali recommended us to halt here, as it was an excellent place for lunch, having shelter from the heat,

VIEW FROM HERMON.

good water, and above all a friendly sheik, who would sell him a good lamb. But the village had attractions to us which Hadji knew not of. It was Nain.

It is poor, confused, and filthy, like every village in Palestine, but its situation is very fine, commanding a good view of the plain, with the opposite hills, and es-

pecially of Tabor, that rises like a noble wooded island at the head of the green bay.

Nain, in the light of the Gospel history, is another of those fountains of living water opened up by the Divine Saviour, which have flowed through all lands to refresh the thirsty. How many widows, for eighteen centuries, have been comforted, how many broken hearts soothed and healed, by the story of Nain,—by the unsought and unexpected sympathy of Jesus, and by His power and majesty! It was here that he commanded those who carried the bier of the widow's only son to stop, and said to the widow herself, "Weep not," and to her son, "Arise!" and then "delivered him to his mother," the most precious gift she could receive, and such as a Divine Saviour alone could bestow.

What has Nineveh or Babylon been to the world in comparison with Nain? And this is the wonder constantly suggested by the insignificant villages of Palestine, that their names have become parts, as it were, of the deepest experiences of the noblest persons of every land and every age.

There are many remains of old tombs to the east of the village, and one may conjecture that it was as our Lord came into the city from Capernaum that He met the procession going towards the tomb in that direction.

We crossed the plain and began to ascend the hills of Galilee which rise abruptly from it. The day was unpleasantly hot, and the sun beat on us with a heat more fierce than we had hitherto experienced in Palestine.

The ascent of the mountain, too, was by a wild path, which ran for some time along the channel of a torrent. There is another path further north, which is shorter, I believe, but it is rougher still. The end of our day's journey, however, was the early home of Jesus. And who would grudge any amount of heat or fatigue when pushing on for such a destination!

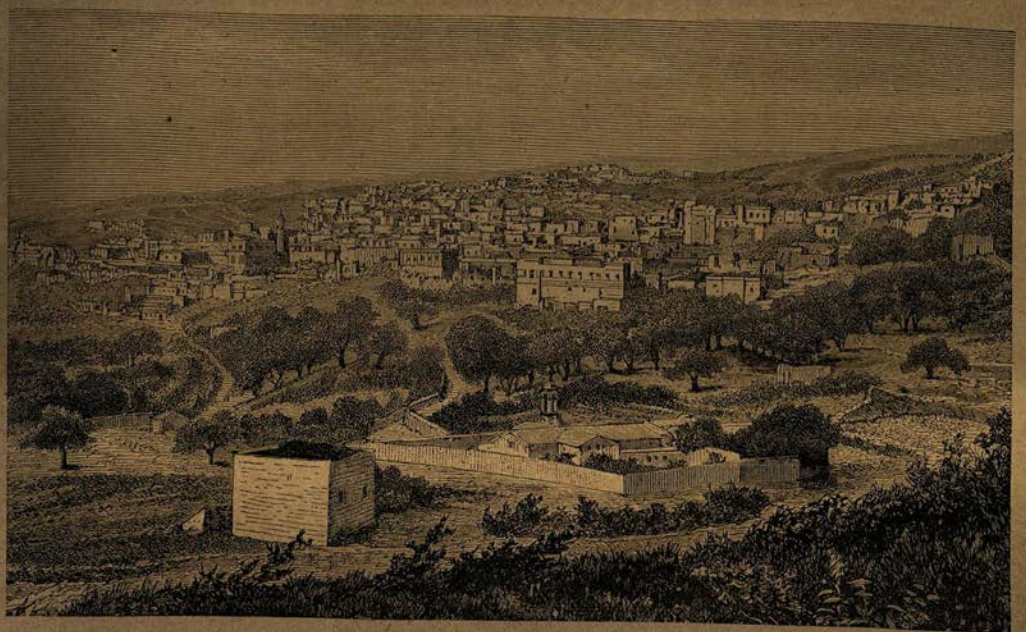
We soon descried the white houses of Nazareth, and with an eager inquiring look gazed on the inland basin, as I may call it, which, like a green nest, lies concealed from the gaze of the outer world among these beautiful secluded hills. We entered the town, and held straight on by church and convent, until, through narrow crowded bazaars and filthy lanes, we reached the further outskirts, and found our tents pitched in an olive grove, whose venerable trees have sheltered many a traveller. From this spot we looked out from the olive grove on the hills of Nazareth. I did not visit any church, Greek or Latin. I had no wish to see the Holy Place of the Annunciation, as pointed out by the Greeks in their church at one end of the town, or by the Latins in theirs at the other. I was much more anxious to exclude every thought and object which could distract my mind when seeking to realise this place as the home of Jesus.

When the sun set I walked, all alone, among the hills. The night was illumined by a full moon, which seemed to stand out of the sky as if it did not belong to the depths of blue beyond. Every object was revealed with marvellous clearness; while the dark shadows from rock

and tree, from "dell and dingle," with the subdued light veiling the bare white limestone, gave not only relief to the eye, but added to the beauty and picturesqueness of the scene.

A low undulating ridge of hills encloses the green plain that lies like a lake, with Nazareth built on one of its shores. I soon reached a point opposite to the town, where I sat down, protected from the intrusion of any chance traveller or prowler by the deep shadow of a tree.

From thence, amid a silence broken only by the barking of the never-silent dogs, I gazed out, feeling painfully, as I often did before, the difficulty of "taking it all in." I inwardly repeated, "This is Nazareth! Here—in this town—among these hills—Jesus was brought up as a child, and was subject to his meek and loving mother, 'full of grace;' here as a boy 'He grew in wisdom and in stature;' here for many years He laboured as a man for his daily bread; here He lived as an acquaintance, neighbour, and friend. For years He gazed on this landscape, and walked along these mountain paths, and worshipped God among these solitudes, 'nourishing a life sublime' and far beyond our comprehension. Hither, too, He came 'in the Spirit,' after his baptism by water and by the Holy Ghost, and his consecration to the ministry; and after that new and mysterious era in his hitherto simple and uneventful life, when He was tempted by the devil. Here He preached his first sermon in the synagogue in which it had hitherto been his 'custom' to



NAZARETH.

worship and to receive instruction; and here, too, He was first rejected—the dark cloud of hate from his brethren gathering over his loving soul. And it was on one of these rocks that there was a rehearsal of the scene at Calvary. Can all this," I asked myself, "be true? Was this indeed the theatre of such events as these?"

There was nothing very grand in the appearance of the place, yet the circumstances under which I saw it prevented any painful conflict arising in the mind between the real and the ideal. The town, with its white walls, all gemmed with lights scintillating with singular brilliancy in the mountain air, seemed to clasp the rugged hill-side like a bracelet gleaming with jewels. Masses of white rock shone out from dark recesses. The orchards and vineyards below were speckled with patches of bright moonlight breaking in among their shadows; while peace and beauty rested over all.

As I gazed on that insignificant and lowly town, so far removed at all times from the busy centres of even provincial influence, I remembered how, in the memorable sermon preached there to his old acquaintances and kinsfolk, these words were uttered by Him:—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;" and how that same Jesus added, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." I then recalled the

previous life of the Man who dared thus to speak:—how since his boyhood He had lived, among the people whom He then addressed, a life marked by no sign or wonder, but only by holiness, which men were too commonplace and unholy to see,—a life, too, in its ordinary visible

FOUNTAIN NEAR NAZARETH.

aspects so like their own, that when He thus spoke all were amazed as if a great king had been suddenly revealed who had been from childhood among them in disguise; and they asked with astonishment, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

Recalling this, and contrasting it with all that had since sprung up out of the holiest hearts, and all that had been accomplished on earth in the name of Jesus, then arose again the question put 1,800 years ago :—"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" And what reply could I then give to it from personal experience, and from the light cast upon it by "the long results of time"? As a minister and member of the Church of Christ, and as a representative of a vast multitude on earth, and of a greater multitude now before the throne of God, I could but say, "Yea!" As sure as there is a right and wrong, as sure as there is a God, the highest good that man can possess and enjoy has come to us out of this very Nazareth!

From an experience tested in every land, in every age, in every possible variety of outward and inward circumstances, we know that Jesus of Nazareth has proved himself to be what He said He was when He preached that first sermon; we know and can testify that in our own spirits He has verily "fulfilled that word"—that He has healed our broken hearts, delivered us who were captives to sin, restored our sight when blind, and given us that light which carries with it its own evidence of truth, and enables us to see God, filling our hearts with joy and gladness! This was my reply.

Next day we ascended the hill above the town, to enjoy the view from the famous Wely. There is not in Palestine a more commanding or more glorious prospect than this. It embraces a landscape which almost takes

in the hills overlooking Jerusalem to the south, and the highlands of the north rolling up in crossing ridges and increasing in height until crowded by the snows of the majestic Hermon. To the west is the Mediterranean stretching to the horizon, the brown arms of the bay of Acre embracing it where it touches the land; while to the east are the hills of Gilead beyond the Jordan, vanishing in the pathless plains of the Hauran.

Within this circumference every object is full of interest. The magnificent plain of Esdraelon lies mapped beneath us with its verdant bays, surrounded by famous shores. The view also among the hills of Galilee is most beautiful, varied as it is by rich inland plains too remote for the ravages of the Bedouin, and by picturesque and broken knolls clothed with wood, vines, and olives, and surrounded by verdant grass and corn-fields.

There is one bright gem in the centre of all—Cana of Galilee—where He, who came eating and drinking, sanctified for ever the use of all God's gifts, calling none of them common or unclean, and the memories of which will for ever mingle with the joys of the marriage-feast. All around us were the "ruins famed in story," which we had seen on the previous day, and one thought was constantly present, that Jesus must often have gazed upon this scene.

NORTHERN PALESTINE.

NORTHERN PALESTINE.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS.

FROM the "Wely" we pursued our journey to Tiberias and bade farewell to Nazareth.

The most striking view on the road is that of the famous "Kürün," or "Horns of Hattîn." The general appearance of the hill is this—

I have applied the word "famous" to these "horns," not because of the view either of them or from them, though both are striking; but because they mark the traditional Mount of the Beatitudes.

This tradition has more in its favour than most tra-

ditions, as the position of the mountain with reference to the Lake of Tiberias in its neighbourhood, and the formation of the "horns," reconcile the narrative of the circumstances in which "the Sermon" seems to have been preached, first from one height, and then from a lower. Dr. Stanley says regarding it:—"It is the only height seen in this direction from the shores of the Lake of Gennesareth. The plain on which it stands is easily accessible from the lake, and from that plain to the summit is but a few minutes' walk. The platform at the top is evidently suitable for the collection of a multitude, and corresponds precisely to the 'level place' to which He would 'come down' as from one of its higher horns to address the people. Its situation is central both to the peasants of the Galilean hills and the fishermen of the Galilean lake, between which it stands, and would therefore be a natural resort both to 'Jesus and his disciples,' when they retired for solitude from the shores of the sea, and also to the crowds who assembled 'from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.'"

It was on these horns also that the last great battle of the Crusaders took place. A strange comment this on the Beatitudes! The first and best account of this famous battle was published by Dr. Robinson. Enough for me to tell, that on the 5th of July, 1187, the army of noble knights, 2,000 in all, with 8,000 followers, drew up in order of battle around the Horns of Hattin to meet the brave and generous Saladeen. The Crusaders

had behaved in a most treacherous manner to the Moslems, and had grossly broken their treaty with them. Saladeen was more righteous than they. They carried as their rallying banner the true cross from Jerusalem;

A CRUSADER.

but the Moslems had its justice on their side, though not its wood. After days of suffering and after many gross military mistakes the Crusaders found themselves terribly beaten, and all that remained of them on the evening of

this awful battle-day gathered on and around the Horns of Hattin. King Guy of Lusignan was the centre of the group; around him were the Grand Master of the Knights Templars, Raynald of Chatillon, Humphrey of Turon, and the Bishop of Lydda, the latter of whom bore the

CRUSADERS' ARMS.

Holy Cross. All at last were slain or taken prisoners, and the Holy Land was lost.

Few know these Crusaders' names now, or care for them. They were famous in their day, and had their ballads and lady-loves, and were the admired of many a pilgrim. But they represented an age that was passing away,—an age that had done its work in the world. Yet who can see with indifference the spot where that

storm of battle roared, amid the gleaming of axes, the flashing of swords, the streaming of banners, the loud shouts and yells of victory or despair, and know that it was the burial-day of the Crusaders, and the triumph for a time of the Moslem, without stopping his horse, gazing on the scene, sighing, meditating, and then—alas for the bathos as well as the pathos of human nature!—probably lighting his cigar?

We rode along the upland ridge which ends in a gentle ascent leading to the summit of the hills that form the western side of Tiberias, and rise about 1,000 feet above its waters. In sight of the Lake, another dream of our life was realised!

Passing round Tiberias, with its many ruins, few palms, and great poverty, we reached our tents, which we found delightfully pitched on the shore of the Lake, and at a safe and pleasant distance from the town.

The first impressions made upon me by the scenery of the Lake of Tiberias are very easily described. *Visibly* it was but a lake, and "nothing more." The east and west shores possess very different characters. The eastern shore has the same aspect as that of the Dead Sea—the same kind of terraced look, as if caused by a series of volcanic upheavings, at long intervals. The rounded hill-tops and broken grass-covered slopes of the western shore certainly wore to me an old familiar look, recalling the hills of Moffat, or those round many of the Scotch lakes.

The general desolation of the shores of the Lake is another feature which strikes us. We see no trees—no

white specks of houses—no trace of life—but a dead monotony without any variety of outline to give picturesque interest. The Lake is about fourteen miles long, six to seven broad at its centre, and five at Tiberias. Yet there is no town on its shores but this ruined Tiberias; and so wholly given up to the lawless Bedouin is its eastern side that there is danger in landing there unless under the protection of some chief, to whom liberal *backsheesh* must be paid.

Yet this Lake was in our Saviour's days one of the busiest scenes in Palestine, with a dozen or more flourishing towns on its shores—gay palaces giving to it the air of wealth and splendour, and a thriving traffic enlivening its waters. As Dr. Stanley remarks, "In that busy stir of life were the natural elements out of which his future disciples were to be formed. Far removed from the capital, mingled, as we have seen, with the Gentile races of Lebanon and Arabia, the dwellers by the Sea of Galilee were free from most of the strong prejudices which in the south of Palestine raised a bar to his reception. 'The people' in 'the land of Zabulon and Nephthalim, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles,' had 'sat in darkness;' but from that very cause 'they saw' more clearly 'the great light' when it came: 'to them which sat in the region and the shadow of death,' for that very reason 'light sprang up' the more readily. He came to 'preach the Gospel to the poor,' to 'the weary and heavy laden'—to 'seek and to save that which was lost.'

TIBERIAS.

"Where could He find work so readily as in the ceaseless toil and turmoil of these teeming villages and busy waters? The heathen or half-heathen 'publicans' or tax-gatherers would be there, sitting by the lake side 'at the receipt of custom.' The 'women who were sinners' would there have come, either from the neighbouring Gentile cities, or corrupted by the license of Gentile manners. The Roman soldiers would there be found quartered with their slaves, to be near the palaces of the Herodian princes, or to repress the turbulence of the Galilean peasantry. And the hardy boatmen, filled with the faithful and grateful spirit by which that peasantry was always distinguished, would supply the energy and docility which He needed for His followers. The copious fisheries of the lake now assumed a new interest. The two boats by the beach; Simon and Andrew casting their nets into the water; James and John on the shore washing and mending their nets; the 'toiling all the night and catching nothing;' 'the great multitude of fishes so that the net brake;' Philip, Andrew, and Simon from 'Bethsaida' the 'House of Fisheries;' the 'casting a hook for the first fish that cometh up;' the 'net cast into the sea, and gathering of every kind'—all these are images which could occur nowhere else in Palestine but on this one spot, and which from that one spot have now passed into the religious language of the civilised world, and in their remotest applications, or even misapplications, have converted the nations and shaken the thrones of Europe."

The town of Tiberias is not certainly very lively to look at, though its insect-life has obtained a world-wide notoriety. I never entered it, as I more and more felt that any supposed gain to my stock of information from the spectacles of filth and poverty which I knew it contained would only be a loss to me in seeking to realise the holy past. I therefore saw its walls only, and these were so shaken, cracked, and crumbled by the great earthquake which occurred in 1857, that their chief interest consists in the visible effects of that fearful earth-heaving.

The present town is comparatively modern. The ancient one was built by that Herod who "feared John" the Baptist, "knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly." Yet he murdered him. It was this same sensual and superstitous tyrant to whom Jesus, when He met him face to face for the first time on the day of his crucifixion, preached the awful sermon of *silence;* for Herod "questioned with Him in many words, but He answered him nothing!"

The ruins of the old city are scattered over the space between the hills and the Lake to the south, as far as the hot baths. Mingled with the shells on the shore are innumerable small bits of what had formed mosaic pavements. We easily gathered many specimens.

We had hardly reached our tents and got settled in them when a boat loaded with Jews pulled past us from the baths to the town. The number of people in it sunk

it to the gunwale, reminding us oddly enough of the little boats and tall forms which are represented in Raphael's cartoon of "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes." A number of men were standing in it singing and clapping their hands in chorus. It was a rather joyous scene, a rare thing in these parts. We were told that it was a wedding procession.

There are only two boats on the lake, and we sent a messenger to the town to secure one of them for us after dark, requesting that some fishermen with their nets would accompany it. For other reasons than they could conjecture, we were anxious to "go a-fishing."

They came accordingly, when the stars and moon were out in the sky. Friends who had travelled with us from Jerusalem accompanied us, and we rowed out on the Lake. Few words were spoken, but each had his own thoughts, as these rough men cast out their nets for a draught, wholly ignorant of other fishermen who long ago had done the same. They were thinking only of *backsheesh*, and possibly of our folly in giving it, the chances of getting anything where we let down the net being so small.

It is unnecessary to suggest the memories which arose as the net was dropped in the calm sea rippling under the moonlight; or as, after encircling a wide space for our prey, we "caught nothing." Were Peter and the sons of Zebedee, and the other Apostles, all of whom were chosen on the shores of this Lake, just such men as these? Were they such "earthen vessels," made rich

only by the treasures of grace with which the Lord filled them day by day through his divine teaching? And if not so supernaturally educated and upheld, how have such men taught the world, become famous, and given names to the innumerable places of Christian worship which have been in all lands called after St. Peter, St. James, St. John? The Divine Spirit alone, who filled the man Christ Jesus, could have transfigured commonplace fishermen and publicans into Apostles, and made a commonplace lake a theatre of wonders.

We bathed in the Lake. I mention this otherwise trifling fact, as it accidentally made us aware of the singular distance to which sounds are conveyed along this shore.

Our party had scattered themselves for convenience, and I was alone, when my friends began to converse at a considerable distance from me. I was astonished beyond measure when, considering the space between us, I heard what was spoken in the tones of ordinary conversation. This induced us to continue the experiment of talking, which ended in our conviction that, making all allowance for the well-known fact of sound being conveyed by water, we had never known any place where the tones of the voice could be so far heard. Our words sounded as in a "whispering gallery." It was evident that on this shore a vast multitude might be addressed with perfect ease. Tiberias is 400, some say 600, feet below the level of the sea, and its banks are high. Does this account for the clear reverberations?

JESUS TEACHING ON THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS.

This Lake is, without question, the most interesting in the whole world. There is no part of Palestine, not excepting Jerusalem even, which is more associated with our Lord's life and teaching. Yet it is impossible to fix on a single spot here, as on the Mount of Olives or at Jacob's Well, and affirm with certainty that there Jesus stood and spoke. His steps cannot be discerned upon the deep; we only know that his holy feet walked over these waters, and that his commanding voice calmed their stormy waves. He had walked and taught on many places along the broad beach which stretches between the hills and the sea;—but where, we cannot tell!

The silence of those lonely hills was often broken by his prayers at night, but God's angels alone know the spots where he uttered his "strong supplications," or those which He watered with his tears.

Opposite Tiberias is the Wady Fik, with its ancient tombs near the road leading to the famous stronghold of Gamala, and with steep hills descending into the Lake.

This is generally admitted to have been the place where our Lord healed the Gadarene demoniac.

Seated on the shore of the Lake, one naturally asks, where did that memorable event occur which is recorded in the last chapter of St. John's Gospel?

The whole scene comes before us as we ponder over the events of those few days:—the weary night of toil, foreshadowing the labours of the fishers of men—the unexpected appearance of the stranger in the shadow of

early dawn—the miraculous draught of fishes, a prophecy of future ingatherings to the Church of Christ—the instinctive cry of the beloved Apostle, "it is the Lord"—the leap of Peter into the sea at the feet of his Master—the humble meal, with such a company as has never since met on earth—the reverential silence first broken by our Lord—the thrice repeated question addressed in righteousness and love to him who had thrice denied Him—the all in all of that question, which involved the essential principle of Christian life, "Lovest thou me?"—the all in all of the command, which involved the essential rule of Christian practice, "Follow thou me"—the duty of those anxious about others shown by the reply to the inquiry, "What shall this man do?" "What is that to thee? follow thou me!"—the announcement of a martyr's death made to him, and to him only, who, from fear of death, had denied his Lord, conveying the blessed assurance that, even in death, Peter would glorify Him;—and the lesson taught to the Church of the untrustworthiness of even apostolic traditions, seeing that in the very lifetime of the Apostles a false tradition had gone abroad regarding the death of St. John, the true story being carefully reported by the Apostle himself:—all this, and more than words can express, is vividly recalled as we sit on this shore; yet it is in vain that we ask, On what precise spot did these events take place?

But there is no real cause of sorrow in our ignorance of such localities. The places where Jesus lived and taught were denounced by Him in terrible words. These words

have been fulfilled, and the ruins (or rather the complete obliteration) of Capernaum once exalted to heaven, in whose synagogues his own voice preached to needy souls the glorious Gospel, and of Chorazin and Bethsaida, typify only the ruin of the souls of those who in any place receive not the truth in the love of it.

The truth itself remains to us, quite independently of the mere accidental circumstances of time and place in which it was first spoken; and the words of Jesus, uttered in a few minutes, will ever remain the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The "Peace, be still," will calm many a storm; "It is I, be not afraid," will bring strength to many an anxious soul; "Lovest thou me?" will search many a heart; "Follow thou me," will direct many a pilgrim.

The world will for ever be influenced, and the Church of God nourished, by the teaching given beside these waters.

NORTHERN PALESTINE.

CHAPTER XXI.

SAFED.

ON our march to Safed on Saturday morning, we again passed the town of Tiberias, and crossed the slope of the steep hill that descends to the portion of the lake beyond it.

This promontory is the southern boundary of the famous plain of Gennesareth, which is three or four miles long by about one broad, and skirts the north-west corner of the lake.

In all Palestine there are no three miles more interesting. The richness of the plain itself cannot be surpassed, though it is only partially and poorly cultivated by a few oppressed and miserable-looking armed peasants. Yet the glory of its vegetation, and the splendour of its

flowering shrubs, suggest a vast "hothouse," whose walls have disappeared, but whose precious exotics remain to beautify the earth. Its tropical heat, the excellence of its alluvial soil swept down from neighbouring hills throughout long ages, the streams of living water that flow through it, sufficiently account for its luxuriant fruitfulness. It is bordered by hills of picturesque form, imposing height, and varied outline.

A noble gorge (Wady el Hymâm), with precipitous rocks, descends in one place, while others less wild open their green sides and pour in their fresh streams; and the mountain mass topped by Safed rises 3,000 feet above all. On this plain, too, and along a line of about seven miles north from Midjel, were those populous and thriving cities with whose names we are so familiar, and where such busy and momentous hours of our Lord's life on earth were spent.

Passing a stream above Khan Minyeh—supposed to be Capernaum, in whose synagogue Jesus so often taught we began the long and steep ascent to Safed, along a path disclosing views really beautiful, and in some places actually grand, as in the Wady Leimun, where the precipices attain a height of 700 or 800 feet.

An hour or so before reaching Safed, we were overtaken with such a deluge of rain as would have surprised even Glasgow and the west of Scotland. It combined the "pouring down in buckets" of England, with the "even down-pour" of Scotland. Where had our muleteer encamped? Were our tents floated off, or were they

only soaked with water, and our beds and bags and portmanteaus reduced to a state of pulp?

Hadji Ali, anticipating the worst, wisely suggested that we should proceed at once to the only house in the city where we were likely to get shelter and tolerable accommodation on fair terms. It was the Austrian Consul's. We consented to enter any ark, if we could only get out of the deluge. So for the Consul's we made, with dripping horses, dripping hats, dripping clothes, and dripping noses.

We entered the city by the channel of what seemed to be the common sewer rushing like a mountain rivulet, and halted at the rough steps which led to the door of a house, whose outward appearance was characterised by a humble disregard of all pretence to architecture, beyond what was actually needed to place one rough stone upon another, leaving spaces for a door and a few small windows.

The chamber into which we were ushered was sufficiently cool. It had stone floors and stone-vaulted roof, but no furniture, save a Consular coat-of-arms, suspended on the wall, and bearing an eagle with two heads, which, by the way, seemed much more puzzled, distracted, and stupid than any eagle with only one head I have ever seen. We found that, although our tents were soaked, our luggage and beds were safe. So in a short time we managed to give our vault some signs of life and comfort.

Another room into which ours opened was a kitchen—

RUINS OF A SYNAGOGUE.

that is, it had a large chimney, and was full of smoke. Here Hadji and Nubi spread their mats and cooked our victuals, making themselves and us equally comfortable. Most thankful were we for our stone retreat, and not the less so when Consul Mierolowski presented himself, and proved to be a simple-hearted, frank, thoroughly kind man. He was delighted to let his lodgings to us, and thankful for the storm which had driven us his way. He is the only Christian in the place, and very seldom sees any civilised Europeans. Travellers, in ordinary circumstances, live in their tents, and pitch them outside the town, passing him by.

Speaking of the rain, he comforted us by remarking, in an offhand consular and statistical way, that an earthquake was due about this time, as they generally come periodically, and the state of the atmosphere was an unmistakable warning. There had been a shock, moreover, three days before, which had made all the inhabitants rush out of their houses; and it was apt to repeat itself, he said, on the third day. We looked at the vaulted roof and stone walls, but said nothing.

Earthquakes, the reader must understand, have been a familiar subject of conversation in Safed since 1837, when from two to three thousand persons perished in a few minutes. The houses circling the hill—like the terraces of the Tower of Babel in the old Bible pictures—then fell pell-mell on each other, crushing Jew and Mahometan into one mass of dead and dying.

But as the Consul, in announcing the probable return

on this day (not necessarily of such an earthquake as would destroy the "Schlupwinkel," as he called Safed, but of such a tremor or shock as might throw us out of our beds), coolly asked a light for his cigar, exclaiming when a few damp lucifers refused their light, "Tausend donnerwetter, noch einmal!" his coolness made us pluck up courage and think of dinner.

The Consul dined with us, and was both intelligent and communicative, his German being very good. He entertained us with stories about the Jews, and the conduct of the Turkish officials towards them, and towards all whom the Turk can swindle or oppress. "For," as he remarked, "these fellows who govern here, such as Abdul Kerim Effendi, or Moodir Bey, know not how long they may be in circumstances to make money, so they must rob as rapidly as possible. They only gather and remit the amount of taxes which they bargained for, all above that sum which they can cheat the miserable people out of, or force from them, is so much gain to their own pockets."

"For example?" I said.

"For example? Well. A Jew not long ago bought a piece of ground here, and began to erect a house upon it. The Turkish official sent for him and told him that one of the workmen had brought to him a bone, dug up accidentally from the ground. It was evident therefore that some true believer had been buried there, and that the house of a Jew could not possibly be erected on so holy a spot. The Jew must stop the building. 'And

lose all my money!' pleaded poor Moses in vain. But Moses knew his man, and expressing his deep regret for the mistake which he had so unintentionally committed, begged to know if a fine, say of 1,000 piastres (that is, a bribe of course to the official), for his sin, would be a sufficient atonement?

"The official replied that he would consider. Having made up his mind to pocket the money and his orthodoxy, he forthwith got a stone cut with a cross upon it, and this he ordered to be buried in the supposed Mahometan graveyard. The 1,000 piastres being paid in the meantime by the Jew, the Turk assembled some of the orthodox Gentiles along with the orthodox Jews, and expressing his doubts regarding the Mahometan origin of the bone, and his sincere wish to do justice to the Jew, suggested that they should dig and examine the earth with care. Soon the stone with the cross was exhumed. 'Ah!' said the Turk, 'I rejoice! It has been a Christian burial place: and what care you or I for the dogs? Proceed with your building!'"

The following was told us by the Austrian Consul:—It is the law of the Jewish community that any money which enters a holy city belongs to the Rabbis on the death of its possessor. Now an Austrian Jew, with his son, had lately come, in bad health, to try the virtue of the baths at Tiberias. Feeling worse, he removed to the town of Tiberias itself, where he died. He left a considerable sum of money in a belt round his waist, of which his son and heir took possession.

"It is ours!" said the Rabbis, "for he died in a holy city, and his personal property is thereby consecrated to holy purposes."

"It is mine!" answered the son, "for I am his lawful heir by the laws of my country."

The Rabbis urged, expostulated, threatened, bullied, cuffed,—but all in vain. "Refuse," they said, "and we won't bury your father, but shall cast his body into a cellar."

The son remained obdurate.

"You must then," said the Rabbis, "lodge with your father,"—and they locked him up in the cellar, in hot suffocating weather, with his father's dead body!

Next day he was taken out, but still refusing obedience he was seized and robbed of all he had. He then fled, and, as an Austrian subject, cast himself for protection on the Consul, our informant, who got him safely and speedily conveyed out of the country, where he ran the risk of being assassinated for daring to rebel against the Rabbis. The Consul was at this time engaged in seeking to get redress.

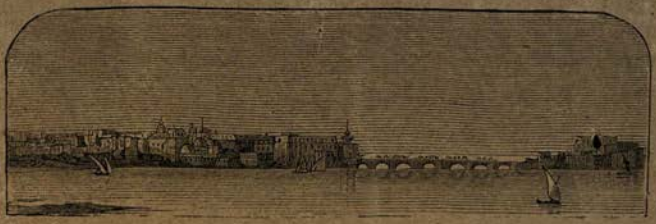
Mr. Rogers, our well-known and excellent Consul at Damascus, who was formerly in Safed and Jerusalem, informed me afterwards that, upon claiming the property of a British Jew who died in Jerusalem, for the behoof of his family in England, burial of the body was refused by the Rabbis until the property was acknowledged to be theirs. This Mr. Rogers resisted, and determined to get the body buried himself. But when about to lower the

Jew into his grave, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, so hot a fire was opened on the burial party from concealed foes on both sides of the valley, that they had to fly for their lives, and secure a strong Turkish guard before they could accomplish their purpose.

The day on which we rested at Safed was Easter Sunday, and we had divine service, attended both by English and American friends, who had more or less travelled with us from Jerusalem. In the afternoon we walked up to the ruins of the Crusader Castle of Safed, which immediately overhangs the town. The great earthquake shook and overturned even its rock-like walls, and completed the destruction which the Turks and Time had long since begun.

The evening was glorious. A holy Easter calm rested on mountain, plain, and sea. The view, too, was magnificent; and the thought that this was almost our last look at Palestine deepened the feeling of sadness with which we gazed on the scene which was so holy to us all. To the south we saw Tabor, and Gilboa, and Hermon; and beyond them, the hills of Samaria. To the west, the long ridge of Bashan lined the sky, dotted with the characteristic moundlike remains of extinct volcanoes. Beneath us, 3,000 feet down, lay the sea of Tiberias, calm as a mirror, shining from its northern end onwards to its southern, where we saw the long depression of the Ghor leading to the Dead Sea. The plain of Gennesareth, and the shore on which Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida must have stood, were mapped out below, the

scenes where so many mighty works of love and power were done. The longer I gazed on this scene and endeavoured in silence to receive the spirit which it breathed, the present became like a dream, and the dreamlike past became present. We came away praising God for his mercy in giving us such an Easter day; and praising Him still more for giving an Easter day to the whole world by which we are "born again to a living hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead." Next morning we began the day's journey that was to take us out of Palestine.



NORTHERN PALESTINE.

CHAPTER XXII.

FROM SAFED TO MAAS.

THE night after leaving Safed we encamped at Maas. The first portion of our journey was through scenery, not only far surpassing anything we had seen in Palestine, but such as would attract attention and excite admiration if seen amidst the glories of Switzerland itself.

The road which we followed during part of the day passed through extensive forests, luxuriant in spreading foliage and carpeted with brilliant flowers, revealing nooks of beauty that reminded me of the natural woods clothing some of our Highland hills and glens. There were many devious and perplexing paths, one of which was followed by our ardent flower-gatherer, and which, perhaps for the first time in his life, led him astray. It was some time

before he was recovered by the habitual wanderer, Meeki.

We rode along the summit of a ridge running north and south. Suddenly, when emerging from the forest into one of its open glades, a scene of great beauty burst upon us. The ridge on which we stood descended for at least 2,000 feet in a series of plains, green with crops, and clothed with underwood; until the hill-side rested on the dead flat valley which extends for twenty miles from the Lake of Tiberias to the roots of Hermon. This plain is occupied by a marsh, through which the Jordan flows into Lake Huleh, or Merom, which lay beneath us far down,—a bright eye, fringed with a broad circle of reeds, like eyelashes.

The situation of the ancient Kadesh Naphtali on the same ridge is very beautiful. I do not remember having seen such noble olives elsewhere. One which I measured was about 18 feet in circumference. The remains of columns, sarcophagi, and buildings—whether Jewish or Roman, I know not—are numerous and impressive. Kadesh was one of the cities of refuge, and it was comforting to think of even the temporary rest and peace that many a poor prodigal got by flying to it. It was also the birth-place of Barak; and nobly did its 10,000 Highlanders second their chief in his brave attack on Sisera, when the more comfortable Lowlanders kept to their fertile fields or profitable shipping.

Joshua also penetrated these inland solitudes when he fought the battle of Merom—just as the brave Montrose,

who, fighting for a worse cause, entered our West Highland fastnesses, and by his very daring secured the victory.

Here, too, Sisera was slain in the tent of Jael—a vile, treacherous act, done by a bold, enthusiastic, ignorant, well-meaning woman, and an act which we cannot but condemn, even when feeling no pity whatever for the brave but tyrannical Canaanite *Cateran* whose death restored to liberty thousands better than himself.

On our journey this day we passed a settlement of Zouaves from Algeria. It is on the side of a most romantic glen, near a hill which Dr. Robinson supposes to have been the site of the capital of Hazor. It was curious to see this village, inhabited by men who have come all this distance from their homes rather than submit to the French. It is probable that they had "compromised themselves" by a too great devotion to their country. But I was glad to see that they appear to have a most comfortable "location," and to be very prosperous in sheep, goats, and cattle.

I must also mention an incident of this day which greatly touched us.

After passing through a prettily situated village—I forget its name—we came upon a rather excited crowd, composed chiefly of women, who were weeping and wringing their hands, as they accompanied our cavalcade of muleteers.

We discovered, on inquiry, that one of Meeki's servants —unfortunate wretch!—was a native of the village; and

that the chief mourners on the present occasion were his mother and sisters, who had received him with joy, and, as the phrase is, "pressed him to their bosoms," as he suddenly and unexpectedly appeared in the old home. The excitement in the village, the honest tears of the women as they gazed after our lad, the eagerness with which relations and old companions accompanied him some way on the journey, I confess, "did my heart good." I was thankful for such evidences of the love which exists everywhere (in some hearts) and makes us all akin.

The object of all this tender solicitude was a remarkably nice youth, whose character might be summed up thus, "good-looking, active, and obliging"—a wonderful contrast to Meeki! I heartily expressed my sympathy with him by giving him the handsome *backsheesh* of a paper of good needles, some excellent thread, some artistic buttons, and a pair of glittering steel scissors, all of which I begged him to present, with my love of course, to his amiable and affectionate mother and sisters. The muleteer gratefully received, and, as they say of the reply to all toasts, eloquently acknowledged, the gift, and the manner in which it was conveyed.

But my subject changes, and with it my thoughts. When opposite Hermon I could not forget that this magnificent mountain, which towers over Palestine, and whose pure and eternal snows join its landscape to the sky, was the scene of the transfiguration of our Lord.

I was thankful, when passing out of Palestine, to be

able to associate with this the last and most sublime view from its sacred soil, one of the most impressive events which occurred in the history of Him whose life is the light of the whole land.

That transfiguration, like Hermon, almost seems alone in its grandeur. It first of all united the old dispensation with the new. For Moses the representative of the law, and Elijah the representative of the prophets, appeared with Jesus in glory, and thus witnessed to Him who had fulfilled both the law and the prophets. Their work was finished. The stars which had illumined the old night were lost in the blaze of this risen Sun. A voice from the Shekinah now said, to Jew and Gentile:—"This is my beloved *Son*—hear *Him*." Moses and Elias therefore depart, and leave the disciples with Jesus alone. Henceforth He was to be all in all.

Hermon, as connecting Palestine geographically with the Gentile world beyond, was a fitting place for such a revelation of Jesus, in whom alone Jew and Gentile were to become one.

The transfiguration also united this world with the next. Moses and Elias had been in glory for many centuries, yet they remained the same identical persons, retained the same names, and spoke the same language, as when on earth. A most comforting thought to us! For while Christ will "change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body," yet to our human hearts it allays many fears, and answers many questionings, to know that we shall for ever be the same

persons; preserving our individual characteristics—all that is imperfect excepted; retaining possibly our old names and old language, as Moses and Elias did; anyhow, that we shall know prophets and apostles, and our own dear ones, even as we are known of them.

This thought makes parting from friends endurable, "which else would break the heart." How soothing to be assured that as certain as Jesus on the sides of Hermon conversed with Moses and Elias from heaven, and with Peter, James, and John from earth, so all who are united to the One Lord are united to each other; and that, though we cannot make enduring tabernacles, or abide in any place, here below with our friends, however dear, we shall yet in spirit, in heaven and earth, live together with Christ and his whole Church. The Death which Christ accomplished at Jerusalem, the only subject, as far as we know, of converse between Him and those heavenly visitants on this day of triumph, is the pledge of this very blessing.

And when in leaving Palestine a feeling of despondency deepened the fear as to our ever joining that grand army —the traces of whose conflicts and triumphs we had been following with such eager interest—Hermon once more supplied us with comfort, refreshing as its own dews, not only from faith in that Death which He *has* "accomplished at Jerusalem," but from the story of that distressed parent, who, disappointed in all other men, had brought his child to Jesus as He descended from the mount, and cried, with mingled hope and doubt, "If

thou canst do anything for us, help us!" Oh, blessed reply! "If thou canst believe!" As if He had said, There is no barrier in me—only in thyself. Believe and live! Oh, blessed confession and prayer, which were accepted and answered:—"Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." With this prayer in my heart I turned away from Hermon, though not from its undying memories.

The river Litany is as impetuous as a glacier stream, without a calm pool, or rippling ford. But we had a good old bridge to cross by, which saved us from all danger and trouble. High above to the left, on the top of a grand precipice washed by the raging stream, are the magnificent ruins of the Crusader's stronghold, Kelat-el-Shukeer (Belfort). There is no ruin on Rhine or Danube so imposing.

We passed the bridge and were *out of Palestine!*

OUT OF PALESTINE.

OUT OF PALESTINE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TO THE LEBANON.

WE encamped at Nabathieyeh the Lower—our next stage after Maas. The whole aspect of the country was now changed. Groves of mulberries began to cover the valleys. The houses of the villages were built more substantially, and with some attempts at art. This could be easily accounted for by the fact that the country is beyond the region which is preyed upon by the Arabs of the desert. There being here some security for property, there was consequent industry with comparative comfort.

At no place did our presence attract greater attention than here. Most persons go to Damascus by Banias, or pass on to Sidon. The tent of the traveller is not so hackneyed therefore at Nabathieyeh as elsewhere.

Crowds accordingly gathered round it, sitting in a circle three deep, the young in front and the old behind, as if gazing on wild beasts from another clime; but all were most civil and orderly. As usual, the musical-box produced the greatest excitement and interest, as did also the performance which I generally added, on the Jews' (or jaws'?) harp. The Arabs are easily amused, and seem to have a keen sense of the ludicrous. A clever toy, an absurd mask, or whatever excites wonder or laughter in children, would stir a whole village, and in most cases be a far better passport for a traveller than the Sultan's firman or ugly revolvers. Laughter and merriment form a better and much more agreeable bond of union between the traveller and the "children of the desert," old and young, than pomposity and power.

I never saw so many perfectly beautiful boys and girls as here. And this is especially true of the boys of about ten or twelve years of age. The symmetry and elegance of their features, the exquisitely chiselled nose, lips, and chin and the calm lustrous eyes, quite riveted me. One boy particularly struck us as possessing a face quite as ideal as that of him who, in Hunt's noble picture, represents the boy Jesus in the Temple.

The next day's journey was not very interesting. We wound down to Sidon, among stupid low hills with nothing worth looking at which I can remember.

We were glad to hail the old sea-port at last. As we approached it, the air for a considerable distance was laden with delicious perfume, which in this case we

found came from orange-trees in full and glorious blossom. I had no idea that the odour of any flowers, even those of Araby the Blest, could be carried so far on the breeze.

We spread our carpets among the orange-trees for lunch and repose, enjoying the smell and the exquisite fragrance from the white masses of blossom overhead.

SIDON.

The whole neighbourhood is one great garden filled with every kind of fruit-bearing trees—oranges, figs, almonds, lemons, apricots, peaches, pomegranates — to nourish which abundant streams of water are supplied from Lebanon.

Our stay unfortunately was short. We had barely

time to visit the old port, within the long line of the wall and castle which protect it from the north. As at Jaffa, the selection of the place as a harbour was evidently determined by a reef of rocks forming a deep lagoon within, and defending it from the waves of the outer sea. But beyond the usual attractiveness to the eye of everything oriental, and the old associations of the place, we saw nothing worth noticing, though there must be much in the town and neighbourhood. It seems a thriving place, and survives in spite of its old wickedness, The sinners, not Sidon, have been destroyed—yet how has its former glory passed away!

Our camping ground for the night was on the river Damur, to reach which occupied us five hours from Sidon. The road from Sidon to Beyrout is described in "Murray" as being "one of the most wearying rides in Syria." We did not find it so. The two voices, "one of the mountains and the other of the sea," never were silent all the way. The "Great Sea" was dashing its billows on the sands to our left, along which we often rode, while to our right the "goodly Lebanon" contributed some of its lower ridges broken with rock and stream, and clothed with trees. We reached our tents about sunset, rather fatigued after our ride; but we enjoyed the luxury of a swim in the "salt sea faeme," which made us all fresh again.

The scenery of a considerable portion of the road next day on our way to Beyrout was extremely fine. The lower ranges of the Lebanon running parallel to the sea,

AMONG THE LEBANON.

with their slopes and glens clothed with mulberry and fig-trees, and covered by white houses and villages high up on their steeps, and with old convents crowning all, reminded me of the road along the Riviera, and in some places was quite as beautiful. After passing through sandy dunes, through large olive groves, and an extensive forest of dwarf pines, we entered Beyrout, and found ourselves in Basoul's most comfortable hotel, and once more in the region of Boots and Waiter, table d'hôte, and civilisation.

Here we learned to our surprise that a French company had engineered an excellent road to Damascus, a distance of about ninety miles, and ran on it a well-horsed, well-appointed, comfortable diligence! No doubt this was very different from the poetry of a tent, and of a long cavalcade of mules and horses winding among the mountains of Lebanon, and along its old historic paths. But I must confess that the prosaic and much more rapid and comfortable mode of travelling was heartily welcomed.

Seated in the coupé, with six strong horses before it to drag us up the Lebanon, we left Beyrout at four o'clock in the morning.

We had a tolerable view of the country as we jogged along, at first slowly, up the steep ascent of the Lebanon for a few thousand feet, then in full swing down its eastern slopes, then briskly across the flat of the Cœle-Syrian plains, then another long drag over the shoulder of the Anti-Lebanon, until finally, after passing along

streams and canals, through cultivated fields and rich gardens and orchards, with horses trotting and whips cracking, we entered Damascus.

Our hotel—the best "Laconda"—combined the comfort of the West with the picturesqueness of the East. The inner court and the fountains open to the skies, the balmy air, brilliant bright blue sky, fresh water, flowering plants,—all gave it an aspect of comfort and luxury which made it a most welcome and unexpected retreat.

Our first expedition in the morning was to a well-known spot, the Wely Nasr, half an hour's ride from the city. The Wely Nasr is a spot which has been visited by every traveller as affording *the* view, which, once seen, will ever be remembered as the finest of the kind on earth.

The one feature which arrests the eye is that wondrous oasis, that exuberant foliage of every hue of green, contributed by various tints of olive, walnut, apricot, poplar, and pomegranate. This is interspersed with fields of emerald corn, topped here and there by the feathery palm, that always witnesses for the clime in which it grows; and with silvery flashes from the streams which circulate amidst the "bowery hollows" and through every portion of this vast garden, covering a space whose circumference is thirty miles, though in the pellucid atmosphere it seems to embrace but a great park. In the midst of this green sea, domes and minarets rise above the half-revealed and far-spreading houses and streets,

like line-of-battle ships moored in some inland harbour; while beyond it all is brown rock or plain, hot and sultry-

ANCIENT CEDARS.

looking, as if beating back in despair the sun's rays that attack it with furnace heat.

Close beside us, and at the bottom of a deep gorge to our right, through which we had passed in the diligence,

the river Barada rushed clear and strong; and parallel to it were several narrow deep canals, cut out of the rock, which convey the water at different levels to the city, gardens, corn fields, and houses, until, having blessed the earth and the homes of men, it disappears into the lakes and marshes seen in the far distance.

But it is not alone what the eye sees which gives the charm to Damascus. It is impossible to separate the glory of any earthly scene from the magic charm with which human history invests it; and Damascus is the oldest city on the face of the earth. It remains a solitary specimen of worlds passed away: it is like a living type of an extinct race of animals.

It was historical before Abram left Mesopotamia. For a period as long as that which intervened between the birth of Christ and the Reformation, it was the capital of an independent kingdom. For a period as long as from the dawn of the Reformation till the present time, the Kings of Babylon and Persia possessed it. For two centuries and a half later the Greeks governed it; the Romans for seven centuries more; and since their departure, 1,200 years ago, Saracens and Turks have reigned here. The mind gets wearied in attempting to measure the long period during which Damascus has survived, as if it were destined to mark the beginning and end of history, to be at once the first and last city in the world!

It is remarkable, also, how many distant parts of the earth are linked to this sequestered and solitary town.

It is linked to Palestine by many a cruel war. The soldiers of King David garrisoned it. Nor can we forget how, in connection with Jewish history, there once passed out of these gardens on his way to Samaria a Commander-in-chief, yet a wretched leper, guided to a poor prophet of the Lord in Samaria, by a young, unselfish, God-fearing Jewish captive, stronger than Naaman in her simple faith and truth; nor how the same man, who went forth with talents of gold and silver and goodly raiments as his precious treasures, returned with them, but valuing most of all some earth from the land whose God had restored him to health; and thinking more of the wild and fierce Jordan than of his own Abana and Pharpar.

Damascus is connected, moreover, with the whole Christian world, for somewhere in this plain the Apostle Paul, at that time an honest Jewish-Church fanatic, under the strong delusion which "believes a lie," and thinking he did God a service, was journeying to extirpate by the sword a dangerous heresy which had arisen. There, beneath a bright noon-day sun, he spoke with Christ, and became "Paul the Apostle," a name for ever hallowed in the heart of the Christian Church.

From Damascus in later years there went forth another power than his, an army which penetrated beyond the Himalayah, and established a dynasty at Delhi which, but as yesterday, after revealing the true and unchanged spirit of Islam, was swept away by British bayonets, so that at this moment the last rays of the sun which, rising

in Damascus, so long shone in India, are setting in the person of the last Mogul, who is a transported convict in the Andaman Islands.

From Damascus other conquering bands poured forth a stream of flashing scimitars and turbaned heads along the Mediterranean; crossed to Europe; and but for the "hammer" of Charles Martel, verily a judge in Israel whose arm was made strong by a merciful God, the crescent might have gleamed on the summit of great mosques in every European capital. The whole history of the city is marvellous, from the days of the soldiers of Babylon to the Zouaves of Paris—from early and oft-repeated atrocities committed on its inhabitants by successive conquerors down to the late massacre of Christians by its own citizens.

But, strange to say, we cannot associate one great action which has blessed the world with any one born in Damascus: the associations are all of idolatry, cruelty, and bloodshed. Yet Damascus lives on, while the site of Capernaum is unknown! Let the traveller review all this strange history as he sits at the Wely gazing on the ancient city, and then, ere he goes to rest, himself a small link in this chain stretching into the darkness of the past, let him thank God that he has seen Damascus.

OUT OF PALESTINE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OUR LAST DAYS IN THE EAST.

WE spent a happy day in wandering through the city. I need not attempt to describe its famous bazaars. I cannot say that I admired them more than those of Cairo, but I thoroughly enjoyed them as a theatre exhibiting out-of-the-way life, and as at every yard revealing such strange oriental groups of human beings gathered out of every tribe, such pictures of form and colour, of man and beast, of old fantastic buildings, and Arabian-Night-looking courts and khans, of shops for every sort of ware and for every sort of trade; such drinks, with ice from Lebanon to cool them; such sweetmeats, the very look of which would empty the pockets of all the school-boys in Europe; such antique arms, beautiful cloths, dresses, shawls, carpets of every kind and colour, as

would tempt the fathers and mothers of the boys to follow their example—all this, and more than I can describe, kept me in a state of child-like wonder and excitement as I moved through the bazaars.

My old friends the dogs seemed to me to make Damascus their capital. I was amused at the table d'hôte of the hotel in hearing a dispute regarding the number of the canine race in Damascus. The question, discussed between two gentlemen who had for years resided in the city, was whether the number of dogs amounted to 200,000 or only 100,000 or 150,000. Some suggested larger numbers, but all agreed that 100,000 did not fully represent the grand army, the possibility of being a soldier in which so shocked the high-minded Hazael.

An illustration, moreover, was given of Mahometan custom as applied to dogs. The law is, that any one accidentally killing another person must pay a fine as blood-money to his relations. But can this law apply to the killing of a dog?—not a Christian dog, who is worthless, but a bazaar dog, who is a useful scavenger. It must apply to dogs—so say the Damascus police—but how? In this way:—a dog's blood-money is valued at sixteen piastres. Well, the murderer of a dog must forthwith report his crime to the police. The district in which the dog usually resided is then discovered, and the murderer must forthwith purchase bread with the blood-money; and as the dog's relatives are very many and not easily ascertained, he must divide the bread among all the hungry mouths that, backed by wagging

tails, may wait to receive it.' We give this illustration of canon, or canine, law as we heard it.

One object seen in passing along the streets I cannot forget, and that was a famous old plane-tree forty feet in circumference. There were others less noticeable, but adding beauty and shade to the thoroughfares and open paths.

We went along the now dreary and dull "Bazaar street, once called "Straight"; which probably represents the old street made famous by the history of St. Paul. Yet this must have been a stately thoroughfare in the time of the Romans. The remains of pillars indicate that a colonnade once ran along each side. The old Roman gate in the south wall, by which the Apostle probably entered, now opens to one side only of the old street. The central archway, and the other side-gate, are both built up.

Among the "sights" which engaged our attention was the great mosque. That we were permitted to penetrate into the Holy Place without fear—in spite of some ugly looking faqueers from India, who seemed to growl hate out of their rags and vermin—indicated a very remarkable change in Islam. It arose out of political events which those most affected by them could no more understand than a child can connect the ebb of the tide in an inland arm of the sea, with the great ocean beyond or with the moon above.

The well-known American Missionary, Dr. Thompson, of Beyrout, told me that he had accompanied the first

British Consul into Damascus on horseback. They were protected by a strong guard. Before then every "Infidel" had been obliged to enter the Holy City bare-headed, and on foot! Every Christian merchant, though possessing a fortune, was also compelled to rise in the presence of his Mahometan Servant! Long after this and as late as the Crimean War, no one except a Moslem could enter the great mosque on pain of death. Yet so great is the revolution caused either by the power of opinion, or by the fear of foreign bayonets, that, as I have said, we walked undisturbed through the mosque, simply paying *backsheesh*—a guinea, I think—to oil the consciences of its orthodox guardians. What a change is here!

We visited what was once the Christian quarter of the town. A more impressive sight I never witnessed. Oh how different is reading or hearing about any horror from actually witnessing it. I often, for example, had heard of slavery, and theoretically loathed it. But when a mother was once offered me for sale in America, and when, with honest tears, she begged me that if I bought herself I would buy her child, round which her arms were entwined, and not separate them, what was the burning shame I felt for a crime to destroy which millions of money and hundreds and thousands of lives have not in vain been sacrificed!

And so, I had heard with sorrow of this massacre, and of the undying hate of orthodox and fanatical Islam. Yet how much more intense was my sense of this hate when

I saw a large quarter of a great city reduced to powdered fragments of stone and lime, and walked through or stumbled over street upon street in a chaos of ruin—hearing in fancy the loud or stifled cries for mercy, and the unavailing shout of desperate defence, from nearly 3,000 Christians, who for a fortnight were being butchered in cold blood by these Mahometan demons!

That fearful massacre was the true expression of Islam, the logical application of its principles. From Delhi to Jeddah, wherever it dare reveal itself, its spirit is the same. Nor can I agree with those who think that this is the last of the massacres. The last sacrifice by Islam will be coincident with its last breath; though there are, no doubt, Mahometans whose hearts to some extent practically correct their creed, and who are, like many other men, better than their beliefs.

But let me pass to more pleasing topics. We visited one or two private houses in Damascus, the Consul's among others, to form some idea of the Oriental style of domestic architecture. One has no suspicion when passing a common plain wall in the street, that on the other side of it may be a splendid palace. Every sign of what is within seems to be carefully concealed, lest it should attract the attention of the mob. A small door and narrow passage which might conduct to the obscure home of an artisan, lead to a dwelling in which any prince might reside.

Few things struck me so much as the beauty, the stateliness, and luxury of these houses. In the centre

is a large court, floored with marble. A fine fountain sends up its crystal water, and trees fill the air with perfume, and cool the ground with their shade. Above is the blue sky, with here and there a distant fleecy cloud. Into this court the public rooms open—not by doors, but by noble archways!

If we pass through one of the archways we find ourselves in an apartment with its own marble entrance and fine fountain, and three high arches, opening into recesses on the right and left and in front. The floors are covered with rugs elevated above the level of the court. There are grand divans along their sides, with windows of coloured glass, while exquisite arabesque ornaments, in purple, blue, and gold, cover the walls and high roofs with intricate traceries and richest colour. Behind one couch we saw a fall of purest water, cooling the air, and passing under the floor to reappear in a fountain below. I have never seen any mansions which so fully realise the idea of a summer residence of perfect beauty.

How much more might be made of this style amidst English scenery, and with an English family to give light and comfort to the rooms!

Anxious to overtake the Austrian steamer from Beyrout to Smyrna, and finding that we might miss her if we waited for the diligence, we resolved to post back during the night. The only kind of conveyance which is placed at the disposal of the traveller is a four-wheeled waggonette, with roof and curtains, and a seat along each side capable of accommodating three persons. We had

TANCRED.

two and sometimes three horses, and were driven by a tall jet-black Nubian.

All looked bright and promising for an hour or so after we started. Then however the wind began to rise, until as we faced it on the ridge of the Anti-Lebanon it blew a hurricane, and the rain fell in torrents. I never was exposed to such a storm. Very soon the curtains, which partially sheltered us, were torn into ribands, and the roof did not protect us from the rain, which soon became sleet, and blew with a fierce and bitter blast through the carriage. We had a strong double umbrella, under which we sought shelter for our heads as we spread it behind the back of the driver; but soon the umbrella was also shattered and torn. My companion, who was not so well rigged as me for the gale, began to suffer greatly from the cold; but as I had fortunately some spare clothes in a waterproof bag, I drew a pair of stout trousers over his (and he did not find them too tight!) a woollen shirt was tied over his head; worsted stockings were supplied for gloves, and with one of the long cushions thrown over him he was enabled in this picturesque garb to weather the tempest. The Nubian showed marvellous endurance, as he drove his two-in-hand for thirteen hours. They were generally strong cattle, but once or twice they stopped, with a disposition to turn tail to the wind, and were with difficulty forced to meet it. The Nubian was thankful to have some brandy poured over his hands when benumbed by the snow on the mountain top at midnight. We also, once or twice, when things looked

very bad, gave the poor fellow some good backsheesh to keep up his heart and spirits. Wet, cold and miserable though we were, yet the wonderful appearance of the landscape at sunrise roused us up. We were then winding our way over the Lebanon, and looking across the Cœle-Syrian plain to the ridge of Anti-Lebanon. The sun, with a red glare, was breaking through the wild rack of storm-clouds which were rolling over the mountains. Above, to the zenith, they were black as night, but gradually passed into a dull grey, and then into a purple, that with ragged edges and long detached locks of streaming hair, swept along the ground, on which ever and anon bright sunbeams lighted up green fields or some bit of mountain scenery. Had the forests of all Lebanon been on fire, and had their smoke, illumined by their flames, been driven by a hurricane across the fields and hills, the effect could not have been stronger or wilder.

As we came in sight of the Bay of Beyrout, about nine o'clock on Sunday morning, we saw evidences of the gale, in a French line-of-battle ship with struck masts, rolling her guns under; while the other vessels, with less majesty but with equal discomfort to the crews, seemed in danger of rolling their masts over.

It being thought prudent to delay the sailing of the steamer in consequence of the storm, we had a refreshing sleep at the hotel.

The storm moderated, and we had to leave the Syrian shore. The foreground of the harbour, with such studies of form and colour as cannot be found in Europe; the

quaint-looking boats, ships, and houses; and the glorious Lebanon rising over the ruined castle or battery that shuts in the port from the North, form a rare subject for a picture of Eastern life and scenery. I could, like some romantic lady, have kissed the old land ere I parted from it; but satisfied with pocketing a pebble from its shore, I stepped into the boat, for Northward and Home!

THE END.

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